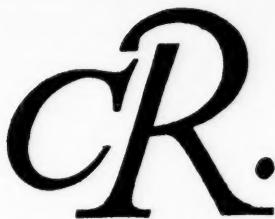


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## AFRICA EMERGENT: A CHANGING CONTINENT

TO BE HONEST, I MUST CONFESS that the title of this number of *The Centennial Review* is over-ambitious, even grandiloquent. But I trust that no reader will be deceived into thinking that the complete story of Africa emergent will be told here, for no single number of a quarterly could possibly encompass the bewildering and endless variety of events which have taken place in Africa within the past few years. The continent of Africa is so vast, ignorance of it so stygian, the speed of transformation so headlong that merely to report the day's events is to be out of date. Indeed, between the time the articles for this issue were first solicited and their appearance in print, new nations have come into being, some already extinct; new leaders have sprung up, some already gone down into obscurity; and tomorrow's crises obliterate yesterday's problems even before they are seen today, let alone solved.

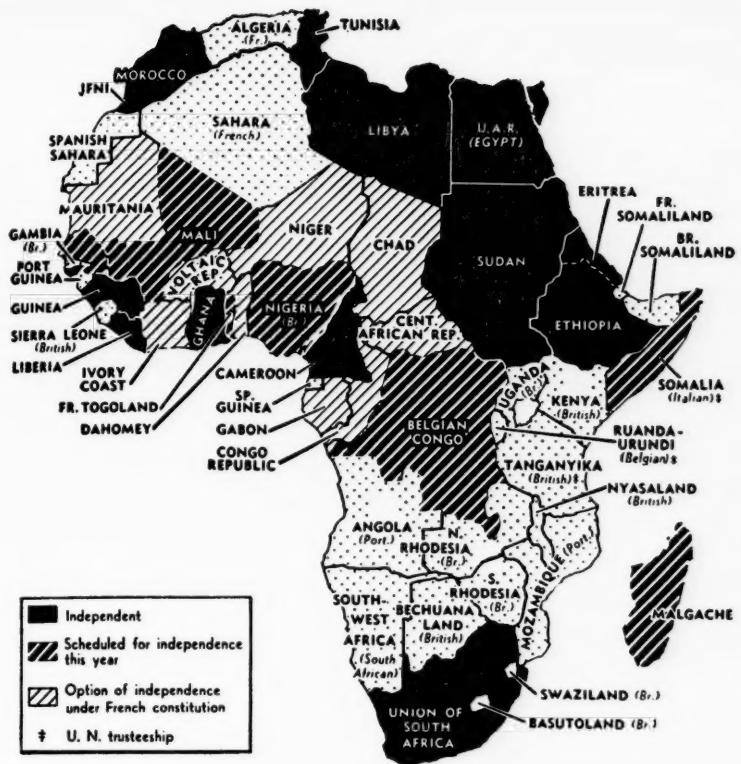
At a time when the peace and security of one country are so dependent on the peace and security of all the others together, no one area can be fairly held to be the sole key to the future, but Africa—along with Asia—precisely because of our past indifference and irresponsibility, now calls us to account. All the best intentions in the world—and toward Africa there have been less good intentions than toward almost any other part of the world—cannot overcome the years of contempt and neglect. For even if we have been less directly involved in the rape of Africa than Europe, we must share the same blame, first, because we profess Europe our ally, and second, because the revolutionary words first uttered in our own demands of freedom from Europe have

finally reached the last ears to need them. And if we have been startled and dismayed at the uses to which they have been put in Africa, we must remember that we ourselves have not altogether grown accustomed to their sound, though we have been hearing them for nearly 200 years, while Africa has heard them for less than 20.

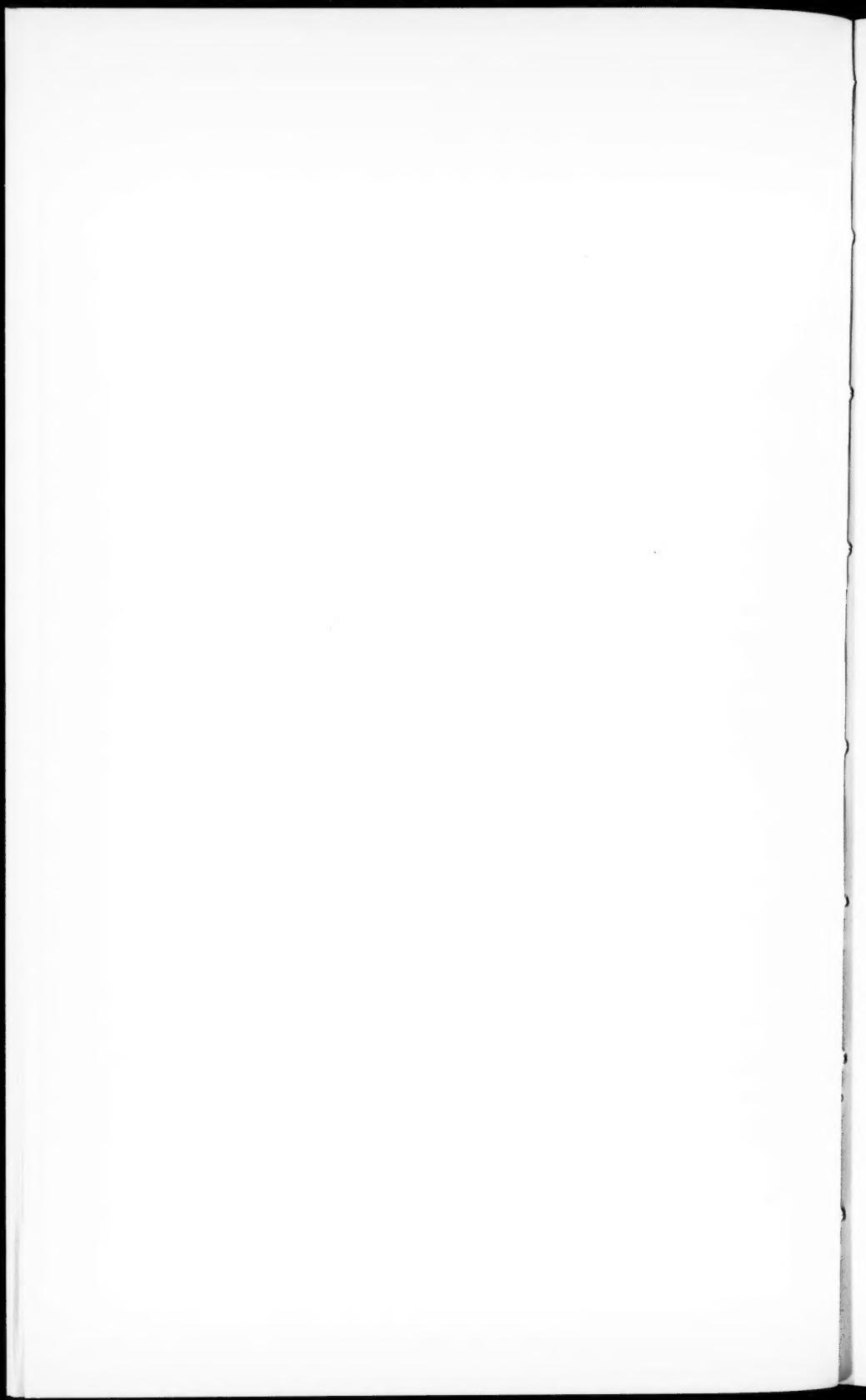
I am not so naive, however, to think all Africans "far more fair than black," nor all Westerners more black than fair. It is often charged that Africans have failed to learn the lessons of democratic government, but too frequently it appears that they have learned them too well. When one witnesses the power struggles in Africa today, of tribe against tribe, of region against region, of party against party, of class against class, of new nation against new nation, of Africa against the West, one sadly realizes that in its haste to catch up with the despised West, Africa has often taken over the very faults which it most loudly condemns, and of which the West itself is ashamed.

But I speak as an amateur and I must make way for those whose devotion to African studies has earned them the right to be listened to with respect. This issue does not pretend to cover every geographical and political region of Africa; rather, I have tried to gather together a group of papers which examine dispassionately and with authority a few long-range African problems in a number of representative fields of African endeavor, problems which will have to be solved no matter who happens to occupy the new seats of power and to which slogans are surely the least useful answer. The problems in these essays, then, are the deep-rooted, the fundamental, indeed, the implacable problems of Africa's future, and it is toward their solution, whose success or failure must affect the destinies of us all, African and Westerner, black and white, that I dedicate this issue of *The Centennial Review*.

I am indebted to Professor Marvin Solomon for his assistance in the preparation of this issue.—The Editor



Reprinted from *The New York Times*, March 27, 1960, page 4E; by permission of *The New York Times*.



## AMERICAN INTERESTS IN AFRICA

*Rupert Emerson*

THE UPWARD SURGE of American interest in Africa roughly parallels the tumultuous political advance of the African people. The coming to independence of Ghana, following the independence of Libya and the Sudan, threw a new light on the continent which has attracted an almost embarrassing rush of American interest. Until the last few years the United States has been prepared to sit complacently on the sidelines, paying a minimum of attention to Africa's affairs. Although they mildly aired their traditional anti-colonial sentiments from time to time, Americans appeared to take for granted the colonial status of the great bulk of the continent as a part of the natural order of things. For the foreseeable future it seemed that the Africans were tucked away securely enough in their colonial wrappings and that the European imperial powers held the strings effectively in their hands. The awakening of the United States—not unlike that of the Africans themselves—has been sudden and abrupt.

### I

The role which the United States can play in relation to Africa will obviously be determined in large part by the way in which that continent itself evolves. There is no occasion to attempt to detail here the recent sweep of African events which has been at the same time both clearly written on the public record and highly obscure in many of its implications.

Moving ahead at a pace far swifter than almost any qualified witness would have deemed conceivable a decade ago, Africa is in process of throwing off one by one all the re-

straints of the colonial system. It has now become a matter of reasonable prophecy that Africa will have emerged from colonialism within the present decade, whereas even an adventurous and far-sighted student of African affairs in, say, 1940 would probably not have predicted such serious cracks in the colonial foundation until about the turn of the century. Although it is a suspect comparison in a number of ways, it may be said that what Europe accomplished in the course of several centuries and Asia in a good many decades, Africa is trying to squeeze into a short span of years.

If one particularly striking example may be singled out, it would be that of the Belgian Congo. Although a handful of those who speculated on the Congo's destinies recognized shortly after World War II that fundamental changes were in the offing, the more general Belgian opinion was that an unbroken vista of slow and solid paternalistic progress stretched out ahead as far as the eye could currently reach. Writing in 1955, a distinguished former Governor-General of the Congo, Pierre Ryckmans, could look ahead with a measure of calm confidence to thirty years of peaceful progress in which the Congolese would continue to regard life under Belgian rule as the best. "Everyone who knows the Congo—all the Congo, not just the large towns—," he asserted, "is convinced that Belgian rule there is indispensable, and that the end of it would be the end of all that we have built up during three-quarters of a century."<sup>1</sup> At about the same time, a Belgian professor scandalized the more conservative among his countrymen by proposing a thirty-year program which would culminate in the emancipation of the Congo; and this was followed in 1956 by the first Congolese political manifesto ever to be issued—cautious and restrained, but a political manifesto none the less. Leisurely decades were reduced to brief and urgent years when rioting broke out in Leopoldville in January, 1959. Both the King and the Belgian

<sup>1</sup> "Belgian Colonialism," *Foreign Affairs* (Oct. 1955), p. 94.

government promptly announced their intent to embark on a vastly speeded-up reform program which would shortly bring independence to the Congo, but, as the King's statement held, "sans précipitation inconsidérée." Around the conference table in Brussels in February, 1960, the years dwindled to months as the date of independence for the politically inexperienced and tribally divided Congolese was moved up to June 30, 1960.

The scramble for independence and the readiness of the Belgians, the British, and the French to grant it, save in areas of strong white settlement, are clear on the record. Obscurity sets in when questions are asked as to what the shape of the African future will be and where it will head. Togoland, Cameroons, Somaliland, the Congo, Nigeria, presumably the Mali federation of Senegal and the French Sudan, and perhaps others are slated for independence this year; but the crystal ball sees no further into the future to tell us whether these states will survive in their present form, will break down into smaller political entities on tribal or other lines, or will merge into bigger units in pursuit of the goal of Pan-Africanism or some part thereof.

How much of democratic constitutionalism will these new states be able to afford and to manage? Or will they shortly drift into authoritarian systems, dominated by the one strong man at the center? It is the conclusion of Melville J. Herskovits and his associates, reporting to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, that:

. . . the indications are that we will see states with one-party systems, based on wide popular support, having strong executives and weak legislative bodies, and political maneuvering within the party rather than between constituted majority and minority groupings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *United States Foreign Policy: Africa*, a study prepared at the request of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Oct. 23, 1959, p. 27. Cited hereafter as the Herskovits report.

This is the pattern which Sékou Touré has established in Guinea, it approximates what Nkrumah has been edging toward in Ghana, and other African spokesmen have confirmed that such a centralized one-party democracy is what they aim at for their countries. But it may well be that the reality in the not distant future in some countries will turn out to be both less orderly and less democratic than this version suggests.

Everywhere there is a drive to secure economic development in order to break out of the round of poverty which has been Africa's eternal lot and to begin to share in the well-being which Western science and technique have made possible. It is ironical that colonialism, which provided the most intimate contact with the West, should be broken off just at the time when the quest for modernization on the Western model is most intense, and particularly when postwar colonialism has itself become a major supplier of financial and technical assistance. As in the political sphere, it remains a wide-open gamble whether or not, and in which countries, economic development will start an upward swing and be able to maintain itself until some semblance of a modern economy is achieved.

Two great interlocking tasks confront the African peoples as they emerge from colonialism. They must press ahead on a multiplicity of fronts with the processes of adjustment to modernity and the contemporary world which have in so many respects barely got under way. At the same time, they must re-order the continent in their own terms after the substantial interval during which their affairs were dominated by the colonial powers. Under colonial rule, each dependency tended to be divorced from its neighbors since its lines of communications of all varieties led directly back to the metropolitan power. Now, intimate new relationships are being established between the African peoples, in part through the medium of a series of African conferences at

Accra and elsewhere. Despite the brave hopes that Pan-Africanism will infuse a sense of unity into the entire continent, the establishment of these relationships makes it inevitable that some sort of internal African balance of power should be worked out, a matter which is daily more complicated as the number of African states multiplies. What, for example, will be the effect of the independence of Nigeria on the constellation of power in West Africa, and how disturbingly will the independence of the Congo impinge on neighboring French, Portuguese, and British territories?

Colonialism imposed its own peculiar kind of stability which is now vanishing. The one prediction which can be made with full confidence is that Africa will experience much change and turmoil in the years which lie ahead while it finds its own level. As Prime Minister Macmillan put it in the course of his recent African tour: "The wind of change is blowing through the continent."

## II

What is to be the role of the United States in this situation? We enter belatedly upon the African scene with a curious mixture of innocence and of some traces of original sin. The innocence derives primarily from the fact that we have had relatively little intercourse with Africa in recent times, although we had a good deal more in the days of slavery and the slave trade; and we are singularly free of commitments to one or another faction, party, or country. The traces of original sin derive both from our intimate association with the imperial powers whose rule is being dispensed with and from our capitalist economy which many Asians and Africans are prepared to identify out of hand with imperialism.

To put the American freedom from commitment in another way, it might be said that our interests are on the whole general and diffuse rather than specific and particular. The process of translating these general interests into more

concrete relationships, attachments, and obligations for the most part still lies before us.

Speaking in human terms, the greatest of our interests is the fact that a tenth of our population found its distant origin in Africa. Increasingly as Africa has forged ahead in the world in recent years, American Negroes have watched it closely and have taken pride in the advance which is being made, as other migrants to the United States have rejoiced in the achievements of the country of their forebears. The coming to independence of African countries has its inevitable repercussions among the African-descended in the United States, and the nationalists' new praise of *Négritude* and the African Personality reverberates in this country as well as in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Looked at the other way around, the way in which the United States treats its Negro citizens is of immense importance for the Africans to whom the news penetrates quickly of discrimination and desegregation, of Supreme Court decisions and Little Rocks. When Negroes seek and are denied the right to eat at lunch counters, it is not long before the word is carried to Africa. American pledges of good will and good intent are then inevitably measured against the treatment which the Negro receives at home.

Personal contacts between Africa and the United States have been multiplying of late. One old-established form of contact which has remained in full force is that of the missionaries, thousands of whom have gone to Africa and have contributed greatly not only to the spread of Christianity but also to education and to health and social services.<sup>4</sup> It may well be that as African states come to independence

<sup>3</sup> As one manifestation of this renewed interest, see *Africa Seen by American Negroes*, issued by Présence Africaine (Paris, 1958).

<sup>4</sup> Joseph C. Satterthwaite, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, gives a figure of more than 6500 American missionaries in Africa, "United States Foreign Policy and Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, Sept. 7, 1959. The Herskovits report, pp. 43-45, gives lower figures: 785 Catholics and 2652 Protestants, plus a much larger number of African staff members of the missions.

greater restrictions will be placed on the freedom of missionary enterprise and in particular that mission schools will be subjected to closer regulation or replaced by secular schools stemming directly from the new governments.

In the past a small number of Africans have come to the United States for educational purposes, including such distinguished leaders as Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. In the last years, Africans have been coming here in a constantly increasing stream either for higher education or for specialized training in one or another technical field, and several programs are now being developed to regularize and further expand this flow. At the same time, reflecting the phenomenal growth in American interest in Africa, more and more American students are finding their way to Africa in connection with a variety of tours, projects, and enterprises. Non-student travel in both directions, official and non-official, has also greatly expanded recently, in many instances sponsored and financed by American Foundations. Americans and Africans still share a large fund of mutual ignorance about each other's countries, but a significant effort is under way to bring the two together.

Economic relations between the United States and Africa, like all other types of relations, have been on the increase, but they have not developed to the point where they can be said to be of central importance for the United States. The conclusion reached in 1958 by Andrew M. Kamarck of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development still seems broadly valid. Pointing out that Africa supplies the bulk of our consumption of a few products, including industrial and gem diamonds, columbium, cobalt, pyrethrum, and palm and palm kernel oil, he suggested that while the absolute figures of our trade with and investment in Africa look impressive, they are relatively not very important. He found that less than one-eighth of one per cent of our gross national expenditure was spent on African products, and

that Africa bought an even smaller percentage of our gross national output. It was his over-all estimate that:

The loss of American imports from Africa would undoubtedly cause hardship to some industries, raise costs somewhat to others, and might cause heartbreak to girls who would have to get engaged without receiving a diamond ring—but one can scarcely claim that Africa is economically vital to us at present. We could get along without African commodities and African markets with an imperceptible ripple in our standard of living.<sup>5</sup>

In 1958 the whole of Africa, with the exception of Egypt and the Sudan, took 3.4 per cent of total American exports and furnished the United States with 4.2 per cent of its imports. In terms of their geographical distribution, American exports to Africa presented a very unbalanced picture since, in round figures, of the total of \$615 million of exports to the continent, nearly \$250 million went to the Union of South Africa (reflecting its higher purchasing power) and another \$150 million went to North Africa, thus leaving only some \$215 million worth of exports for all of sub-Saharan Africa excluding the Union. Our imports from Africa in 1958 were more evenly distributed between a number of countries. Of total American imports valued at \$557 million, only \$93 million came from the Union and \$34 million from North Africa, which meant that \$430 million of our purchases came from the great mass of tropical Africa which lies between the continent's two extremities. The largest single supplier of the American market was the Belgian Congo, from which we drew products valued at \$95 million. Despite the assumption that Latin America monopolizes our coffee market, it is of interest to note that some thirty per cent of American imports from Africa consisted of coffee.

Africa's share in private American overseas investment has

<sup>5</sup> "The African Economy and International Trade," *The United States and Africa*, The American Assembly, 1958, pp. 118-119.

been and remains slight, although American business interests have been increasingly drawn to the continent of late. In 1958 the global figure for American direct investment abroad was officially set at \$27 billion, of which the total African share came to only \$789 million.<sup>6</sup> As with American exports, the distribution of this investment is highly uneven since the Union of South Africa claims nearly half of it and a lesser but still substantial sum has gone to North Africa. A large segment of the American investment in Africa has gone into the provision of facilities for the petroleum industry, and as the prospects for petroleum finds in Africa improve, it is to be assumed that more American capital will be available for prospecting and production.

In contrast to the magnitude of its operations elsewhere in the post-war years, the contribution of the American government to Africa has been kept at an insignificant level. A little American aid has gone directly to the independent African countries and small sums have been made available to African dependencies through the European administering powers, but no major African projects have been attempted. This state of affairs is presumably to be explained by Africa's colonial status and by the lack of special American commitments in the continent. The report to Congress on the Mutual Security Program transmitted by the President on January 14, 1960, stated that American economic and technical assistance programs for Africa stood at \$97.1 million for the fiscal year 1959 as against \$61.5 million two years earlier, indicating an upward trend but still sharply limited totals. Of these sums only a small part was destined for Africa south of the Sahara. It has been stated that all of Africa, save Egypt, in the decade ending in March, 1959, was allocated less than

<sup>6</sup> This figure is taken from S. Pizer and F. Cutler, "Capital Flow to Foreign Countries Slacks," *Survey of Current Business*, August, 1959. Other estimates run substantially higher. The UN Economic Survey of Africa since 1950 (E/CN.14/28, New York, 1959) estimates the book value of U. S. outstanding direct investment in Africa in 1957 at \$1.2 billion. South African sources claim an investment of \$600 million in the Union alone.

\$200 million out of the global American aid figures of some \$25 billion.

Even though Africa's needs for development purposes are immense, it appears to be Washington's conclusion that the great bulk of the load should be carried by the European powers. Although the United States will remain in the picture and the Export-Import Bank and the Development Loan Fund are available for African use, according to the New York Times, ". . . the State Department expects the big investments to continue to be made by European countries and by international institutions."<sup>7</sup> In his special message to Congress on February 16, 1960, on the next installment of the Mutual Security Program, President Eisenhower included a request for an appropriation of \$20 million to meet what he termed the imperative need for increased education and training in Africa in order to establish the indispensable pre-conditions of vigorous economic growth.

In the political sphere, the United States has, with a single exception, almost nothing in the way of established commitments in Africa. Presumably Africa's absorption into the European colonial domain has been the key factor in preventing a more far-reaching entanglement in the affairs of the continent. The one exception to America's lack of political commitment is Liberia, whose relations with the United States, despite substantial swings up and down, have been close ever since the country was established as a place of refuge for freed American slaves—and to remove the freedmen from the temptation of making trouble here. A new departure in American policy came with the secret signing of an executive agreement on July 8, 1959, not announced until September, which established an American defense commitment in relation to Liberia. Under this agreement, the two countries were pledged immediately to determine

<sup>7</sup> February 3, 1960.

appropriate action for the defense of Liberia in the event of aggression or threat of aggression against that country.

With some reservations, including this Liberian agreement, it can be said that the American strategic and defense interest in Africa is of the same diffuse and general order as its economic and political interests. In the realm of defense, the primary American concern is to ensure that no part of Africa falls into hostile hands, but this appears to raise no very urgent problems since the security of the continent is not presently threatened. Furthermore, African armaments are nowhere of major importance nor is there any present intention of substantially increasing them. One area in which the United States has a special degree of involvement is North Africa where American forces operated in World War II preliminary to the attack on Europe. In particular, the United States has established major bases in both Morocco and Libya, although it is pledged to withdraw from the former since independent Morocco refuses to accept the agreement made earlier with France.

### III

The mention of the strategic importance of North Africa brings promptly to mind the fact that one important element has so far been overlooked. Such an analysis as has been undertaken justifies, I believe, the view that the American concern with Africa is general rather than specific and that we have few particular interests to support or defend. Yet to put the matter in these terms is to miss one vital dimension: our interest in Africa cannot be stated without full recognition that we are intimately linked to European powers whose African involvement is vastly greater and more central than our own. In whatever direction one may choose to look, our European allies have a stake in Africa which it is impossible for us to ignore even though, on due reflection, we may conclude that it is of greater moment for us to give our attention

to the rising African peoples than to the imperial powers which are in process of withdrawal. Thus, to take the single example of North Africa, while this is a part of the world remote from us and figuring only as one piece in our over-all strategic plans, for Europe it is a next-door neighbor which could prove of supreme importance either for defense in depth or as an enemy base for attack.

Economically, politically, and strategically, the European interest dwarfs that of the United States, and the United States cannot be indifferent to the effect on Europe of African events. American investment in and trade with Africa are both relatively inconsequential, but this is far from being true for several European countries which would find themselves gravely affected if there were to be a serious interruption of their economic connection with Africa.

Here, in African eyes at least, the taint of original sin enters in to mar the innocence of the American approach to Africa. The new African leadership conceives of itself as being engaged in a great crusade to put an end forever to the injustice and oppression of colonialism. The United States, on the other hand, has on the whole been content to see its role as that of a benevolent and disinterested bystander, approving the principle of self-determination but also judiciously guarding it against hasty abuse. Thus American spokesmen have not infrequently cited the cool comment of Secretary of State Dulles in 1958 that the "United States supports political independence for all peoples who desire it and are able to undertake its responsibilities," leaving in the air the assumption that we or some other outsiders are entitled to sit in judgment as to whether or not African peoples are ready for independence. The Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Joseph C. Satterthwaite, in a speech on August 21, 1959, asserted that the African people look to the United States for moral leadership and sympathetic understanding of their aspirations. The studied moderation of the

American position, however, even though that position has worried the colonial authorities and the white settlers, was not likely to arouse any great enthusiasm among the Africans. Tom Mboya, one of Kenya's outstanding political leaders, no doubt speaking for other Africans as well as himself, has expressed the "puzzled disappointment" which he felt as he contrasted American policy toward Africa with his earlier hope that the United States would furnish inspiring leadership in the anti-colonial struggle. "It is not enough," he added, "to preach democracy and Christianity unless it is lived."<sup>8</sup>

#### IV

Given the dramatic speed with which African affairs are evolving, it is evident that in the years ahead the United States will be confronted with the need to make many decisions on African matters, and of these a number are sure to be painful. The present lack of specific commitments and obligations gives us a singularly free hand, at least in principle, to maneuver and to shape our policies. The other side of the coin is that precisely the absence of established patterns of action and of concrete pressures may postpone the taking of decisions until some sudden turn of events forces us to react belatedly to what has already happened, as we did in the case of Guinea's independence.

There is good reason to be wary of generalities which interpret American policy as being all sweet reasonableness, identifying the national interest with benevolent love for others, but I believe that in this instance it is realistic to assess the American interest in Africa as resting essentially upon the desire to see the continent develop in peace. Apart from humanitarian and economic concerns, the principal American interest in development must derive from the fact that devel-

<sup>8</sup> "Our Revolutionary Tradition: An African View," *Current History* (December, 1956), p. 346.

opment is sure to be undertaken, and we would vastly prefer to have it take place under U.S.-Free World auspices rather than under those of the Communists. As for peace, it can be cogently argued that every stirring up of trouble and antagonisms is likely to be used against us. Despite such "puzzled disappointments" as may exist, there appears to be still a large reservoir of friendship for the United States—based in part, to be sure, on the expectation of benefits to be received from this country—and only a minimum of Soviet penetration. Wherever two or more parties come into conflict with each other, one is likely to be tempted to turn to the Communist bloc for support. The disaffected and the dissident are natural recruits for the Soviet camp.

But we will make a great mistake if we shape our African policies on the basis of our attitude toward Communism and the Communist bloc. For Africans this is not the paramount issue, and it is highly improbable that we will be able to persuade them that it should be. Appearing before the United Nations General Assembly on November 5, 1959, Sékou Touré, architect of Guinea's independence, asserted that the colonial question was the central one for Africans, who would judge the sincerity of the two world blocs by the efficacy of their contribution to the struggle against the oppression of one people by another. He denied that Africa should be asked whether it belonged to one camp or the other, and maintained that the camps of the East and West should rather be confronted with the question of paramount importance: "Yes or no, are you for the liberation of Africa?"<sup>9</sup>

On thoroughly understandable grounds, neutralism is to be expected as the probable African response to the pressures of the outside world, and the United States will be well advised to accept such a response with good grace. To Africans as often to Asians there is a basic and unpardonable incongruity in American readiness to make a loud public outcry about

<sup>9</sup> *The United Nations Review* (December, 1959), p. 21.

evils and abuses in the Communist fold but to pass silently by South Africa's *apartheid*, Algeria's colonial war, and the beating to death of African prisoners in Kenya's detention camps. Africa's grievances must be squarely faced by the United States if it is to retain African respect and collaboration.

American investments and aid for development will be eagerly solicited but no vast ingenuity is required to predict that whatever way the United States decides to play it, criticism can be guaranteed. If large and prompt American support is forthcoming, some Europeans will seize upon this as evidence of a cynical plot to replace European by American control, while Africans who are so minded will warn of the dangers of a new imperialist servitude. If the American economic involvement is small and delayed, this will be taken as evidence of the unwillingness of the United States to accept its share of the costs of development and, no doubt, of its sinister desire to prevent the Africans from rising out of their economic inferiority. We would do well also to recognize that the accident and cyclical swings of the American market may frequently have far more serious effects on African economies than deliberate policy decisions in relation to loans, grants, and investments.

The political decisions which will have to be taken promise to be peculiarly baffling, although with good fortune and good management the United States may be able to continue to abstain from entanglement in some of the African controversies in which it has no direct share or concern. In a general sense, it is presumably in the American interest to see the emergence of a few large political entities in Africa rather than a protracted process of Balkanization, and stable constitutional democracies are preferable to dictatorships, but these are matters in which the United States can play an effective role, if it is to intervene in them at all, only if it operates with restraint and discretion. Situations will inevitably arise, how-

ever, where we are forced to choose between rival claimants or to decide how we will conduct ourselves in relation to perhaps corrupt and authoritarian regimes which have established themselves in one or another country. We can no more call the tune for Africa than we could for Asia, and we must learn to deal with the things we do not like as well as the things we do with a combination of tough-minded realism and of sympathetic comprehension of the immense difficulties confronting the new countries.

The most fundamental decision which we must take, and one which is already upon us, is the one which was laid before the General Assembly by Sékou Touré: Yes or no, are you for the liberation of Africa? In the abstract it is easy to answer Yes, but in the concreteness of the real world such an answer may mean running afoul of our allies, the European colonial powers, although they have moved far in the postwar years toward dismantling their empires and returning Africa to the Africans. The needs and claims of our allies and NATO associates must evidently be taken into account. Only in rare instances, however, will it be either politic or legitimate to give them priority over the needs and claims of the Africans where the two conflict. The twin guiding stars of policy must be that the era of colonialism has come to an end and that Africa is taking charge of its own destiny. In the working out of that destiny the United States and the West still have great contributions to make. To attempt to make them within the framework of the colonial system will mean bitterness and bloodshed. There remains good reason to hope that a new and more fruitful collaboration can be worked out in a radically transformed atmosphere of freedom and equality.

## ECONOMIC-GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION AND CONSOLIDATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

*William A. Hance*

WITH POLITICAL EVOLUTION progressing at scarcely an evolutionary pace in Africa, there has been much speculation regarding the possible effects of weakening Eurafrican bonds and, even more, regarding possible boundary changes within Africa in the years ahead. What will be the effects of fragmenting ties between African territory and European state? Will the artificial boundaries imposed from outside during the partition of the continent remain recognizable? Will the forces of Balkanization prevail within the continent? Or will there be consolidations into larger states or confederations?

No one can possibly foretell the outcome of the political struggles now going on in Africa. But it is desirable, I believe, to attempt to analyze as objectively as possible the potential gains and losses resulting from the changing ties between Europe and Africa, and from the creation of larger or smaller states in sub-Saharan Africa. Such a study requires the expertise of numerous disciplines: anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, geography, and many others. But I shall confine my analysis to economic-geographic factors, and I stress at the outset that these are only a few of the important elements which must be considered by those who will have to make the political decisions.

Most of us are at least vaguely cognizant of the *historical* contribution of certain economic and geographic factors to

the processes of fragmentation and consolidation. We know that developing economies have enlivened the spirit of independence, that real and imagined exploitative practices have exacerbated Eurafrican relations, and that self-interest of the richer areas and jealousy of the poorer areas are disruptive forces. We are aware, too, that certain basic physical conditions have tended to create ethnographic boundaries or have required differing patterns of land use; examples here are the climatic barrier of the Sahara, the landform barrier of the Ethiopian massif, and the belt of tsetse fly between pastoralists and shifting agriculturists. We also know that the development of communications and transport facilities, the introduction of a common currency, the gradual growth of an internal exchange economy, and urbanization have tended to increase integration and interdependence. But rather than elaborate upon these issues singly, I shall attempt to outline the possible effects in the future, first, of fragmentation, and second, of consolidation, in the relationships between Africa and Europe, and within Africa, south of the Sahara.

### I. The Effects of Fragmenting Eurafrican Ties

Among the processes of fragmentation there are, first of all, the loosening ties between European metropoles and African territories, the change from colonial to self-governing status which is the *raison d'être* of current speculations regarding the future political map of Africa. Beneficial as this accelerating political evolution may be, it does entail for African countries numerous potential economic disadvantages which must be recognized.

These include, first, a possible substantial reduction in public and private capital flowing to Africa. Colonial Development and Welfare funds, for example, are not available to independent nations; the French have stated that members disassociating themselves from the French Community need

not expect continued allocations from F.I.D.E.S. (Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development); and private investors may feel less secure in an independent than in a colonial milieu.

Second, there may be a loss of skilled personnel, so desperately required in Africa. Serious damage would be done if foreign administrators, technicians, scientists, and industrialists were to leave too rapidly. A special case is that of the European farmer. While he may readily be replaced in some areas, his contribution to the national income of such territories as Kenya and Southern Rhodesia is proportionately so large that any mass exodus could easily cause an economic collapse.

Third, there may be a diminution in contacts between scientific organizations in Africa and those in Europe, which would inevitably extend the time required for an understanding and solution of the numerous and difficult physical problems which limit African economic advance.

Fourth, there are the problems growing out of the possible disassociation of an African country from the monetary bloc and the trading system of which it had been a part. These problems would perhaps be most serious for French territories, whose foreign trade has been tightly, too tightly, tied with the French market. While these close ties have basic disadvantages, it might well prove painful to lose the guaranteed and subsidized markets now extended by France for so many African staples. About the only commodities which have not received support, in fact, are logs, cacao, and mineral products.

Fifth among the deleterious results of weakened Eurafrican ties is the fact that there will doubtless be an increasing intrusion of Communist nations into the economic scene, evident already in Guinea, the Sudan, and the Cameroon. And, lastly, there is the danger that African nationalism will adopt undesirable economic policies such as those Western Europe itself

has been struggling to eliminate in postwar years. Constructive nationalism may be almost a necessity for economic advance, but nationalism can readily become destructive, particularly by harassing private foreign investment and by protecting inefficient domestic enterprises.

On the other hand, certain economic gains may offset the possible losses resulting from the partial or complete severance of ties between African territories and European powers. These include, first, the elimination of inhibiting restrictions, such as tariff barriers and quotas designed to favor the metropole; obligations to use European companies for construction work; requirements to ship via the fleet of the governing power; restrictions on the level of industrial production in Africa (examples are the artificial limitation on the output of peanut oil mills in Senegal or of cement in Angola); restrictions on the production and sale by Africans of agricultural produce competitive to that from European farms, ostensibly to preserve foreign markets through quality control (happily, this type of regulation is fast disappearing in the colonial territories); and restrictions on the advancement of Africans in civil service, industrial, and technical employment.

A second advantage accruing from severance of ties is the enthusiasm which would be unleashed, and which could have a distinctly favorable impact, if it can be sustained, in the economic field. Third, and of great importance, achievement of autonomous status is likely to go a long way toward removing racialism and colonialism as issues in economics.

## II. The Effects of Fragmentation within Africa

Next, there is a complex of forces working toward fragmentation or Balkanization within Africa, forces which include the divisive tribal tendencies and intertribal frictions, the linguistic and religious differences, the incipient nationalisms, the generally low level of economic interchange, the

rival ambitions of political leaders, and the desire of some territories not to be federated with territories of differing racial makeup.

Those believing that fragmentation is likely to be the dominant trend, at least in the short run, point to such examples as the partial break-up of French West and Equatorial Africa and the rapid contraction of the proposed Mali Federation to but two states, Senegal and Sudan. They also note the strength of tribalism within the fairly tenuous Federation of Nigeria, the desire of Buganda to achieve independence without reference to the remainder of Uganda, the bitter denunciation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland by Africans in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, the seemingly intractable hatreds among the peoples of the Horn, the bewildering complexity of political parties in several territories, and the lack of cohesion in such large and sparsely populated areas as the Congo, French Equatorial Africa, and Tanganyika.

But before I turn to an analysis of the possible effects of fragmentation, I must mention a few key characteristics of Africa's present economic position. First, there is relatively little economic contact and exchange among African territories; the vast bulk of foreign trade and economic ties are with other continents. Exceptions to this generalization include the fairly substantial trade between the Rhodesias and South Africa; the significant transit shipments at such points as Lobito, Beira, and Lourenço Marques; and, probably most important, the international migratory movements in many parts of Africa.

Second, it is unfortunately true that the economic nationalisms of Europe have in the past been carried over, sometimes in an exaggerated form, to Africa. Examples have already been cited in the commercial and industrial spheres, but one of the most unfortunate applications of such nationalism is seen in the field of African transport, in which al-

most all territories have more or less followed the Belgian precept—"tout pour le voie nationale." This policy has resulted in the unnecessary duplication of facilities, in the use of longer and less suitable routes, and in delays and congestion on officially approved routes. The consequent disadvantages include higher investment and operating costs on railways, which often require subsidization anyway, and higher charges for moving produce from some remote areas, which to some degree must reduce the possibilities of their development.

A few examples will illustrate this point. In Guinea, the French long tried to route traffic from Geukedou and Kissidougou via truck and rail over the much greater distance to Conakry instead of permitting it to move more directly to Monrovia or Freetown. In the Congo, extreme efforts have been made to concentrate traffic on national routes. Even when the Matadi-Leopoldville axis was highly congested, the lightly burdened Brazzaville-Pointe Noire railway, in French territory, was permitted to carry but a trickle of goods. And only in recent years has there been a more rational utilization by the Congo of the Benguela Railway to Lobito, while national policy still continues to favor using the national route for the remote eastern reaches, which could employ routes only half as long and with fewer trans-shipments to Indian Ocean ports.

A third characteristic of present economic relations among African territories is the much greater degree of cooperation since the war. This development applies to the collection and exchange of statistics, to the field of transport, and particularly to the technical and scientific fields.

In the light of these considerations, the question may now be asked: what would be the economic effects in Africa if the trends toward fragmentation prevail over the efforts toward consolidation?

First, fragmentation would tend to rigidify tribal and na-

tional boundaries, whereas, economically, Africa needs the greater fluidity it can gain from the breaking down of artificial impediments to exchange. This rigidity might well increase the transport and trade anomalies which were noted above. It would tend to reduce interregional trade, which, while still small, has grown significantly since the war. It would also tend to inhibit the free movement of peoples. We have already witnessed, for example, the expulsion of non-resident Africans from Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Ivory Coast; and the "problem" of migrant workers also appears to be causing increased concern in Buganda and the Gezira. It has also recently been suggested that South Africa and Southern Rhodesia could avoid the dangers of unemployment for many years by placing embargoes on the flow of labor from outside their areas of jurisdiction.

Second, Balkanization in Africa is likely to result in the creation of political units which are not economically viable. Some might suffer the disadvantages of a landlocked position. There would be more "one-product" economies. The smaller size of individual territories would be less attractive to foreign investors and would, in the long run, seriously reduce the appropriateness of establishing market-oriented manufacturing establishments.

Third, fragmentation would increase the expense of administrative services and would be likely to decrease the effectiveness of technical and scientific bodies, because it would be more difficult for smaller units to provide adequate funds and there would certainly be more severe staffing problems than now exist.

Whatever the political, cultural, and social arguments may be, economic considerations weigh heavily against fragmentation. This is true whether one speaks of relations among present territories or within existing units. The more poorly endowed regions might well become poorer. And while the richer areas split from existing territories might benefit

temporarily by not having to contribute to the development of more backward regions, their long run opportunities for economic advance would be more circumscribed.

### III. Possible Effects of Consolidation in Africa

While size is certainly no panacea, it is fortunate, I believe, that certain forces favor the continued existence of large territories or the formation of larger political units or associations. These forces include the desire to unite tribes split by artificial boundaries; the example of the United States, which is frequently cited by African leaders; the ambitions of indigenous political leaders; and the intellectual attempts to define an African personality.

It follows from what has already been said that formation of larger political units would bring considerable benefit to Africa. This may not be so apparent today with the limited inter- and intra-territorial movements, but surely the evidence of Europe reveals how much more difficult it is to weld nations together than it is to tear them apart, and how damaging an excessive division can be, especially when destructive nationalism is dominant.

The economic benefits which are likely to accrue from consolidation are the reverse of the disadvantages inherent in fragmentation: greater opportunities for regional specialization and exchange; more rational development of transport, water control, scientific research, and disease and health programs; reduced vulnerability, from the national standpoint, to the vagaries of climate; and manufacturing and the formation of multi-product rather than one-product economies.

Given his choice, the geographer might stress two or three points pertaining to the specific boundaries of prospective units. First, it is desirable to have a variety of physical regions and resources within a nation to increase the opportunities for regional specialization. In West Africa, for example, this would mean that it would make more sense to have north-

south rather than east-west boundaries in order to unite the several climatic and land use types involved. Second, it is preferable to have boundaries along water divides rather than along rivers. The difficulties of installing irrigation, navigation, and hydroelectric projects on international or even interstate rivers are all too notorious. In Africa, where there is such great need for water control projects, it would be particularly desirable to avoid laying boundaries along river courses. Third, it is undesirable to create landlocked areas; and fourth, it is preferable to have relatively large political units with reasonably large numbers of people. A glance at the map of Africa, however, soon reveals that in some areas these desiderata would entail some conflict, and therefore, some degree of compromise would be necessary.

The question might be asked: are there *natural* regions that should logically be considered in discussing the formation of new political units in Africa? Or, to put it more directly: assuming that it is too utopian to expect a union of the whole region, what federal units might be formed and where might the boundaries be drawn if non-physical considerations were ignored? My answer to this rather academic question would delineate six large, hypothetical federations:

1. West Africa, with a northern boundary in the Sahara and an eastern boundary approximating the present eastern borders of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger;
2. West Central Africa, including most of the Cameroons, French Equatorial Africa, part of the Sudan, Belgian Congo, and Angola;
3. The Sudan, enlarged on the west;
4. The Horn;
5. East Africa, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and Ruanda-Urundi; and,
6. Southeastern Africa, comprising the Rhodesias and Nyasaland plus Mozambique.

This division, I repeat, is largely an academic exercise. For ethnographic, political, and other reasons, some of these federations are not at all likely to develop. But some are surprisingly close to combinations that already exist or that have been proposed by the Africans themselves. A United States of West Africa has frequently been mentioned as a goal by such leaders as Nkrumah, Touré, and Tubman. West Central Africa is partially comparable to the suggested United States of Latin Africa and would unite such tribes as the Zande in the Northeast and the Bakongo in the West, each now included in three different territories. A federation in the Horn is most unlikely, though a loose federation would benefit Somalia by a freer movement of nomadic graziers and parts of Ethiopia by the use of a more rational route to the sea. East Africa would benefit from the already existing customs arrangements and the coordinating responsibilities of the High Commission. And Central Africa would no longer be a land-locked area.

#### IV. The Reformulation of European-African Relationships

There remain for discussion certain points regarding consolidation between Africa and Europe. The need for capital and skill plus the present existence of rather powerful non-political ties between African territories and Europe suggest the importance, after independence, of retaining or reformulating some kind of Eurafican relationship. The dangers are that aid will be reduced just when the need for it is increasing, and that exacerbated relations and a desire to Africanize too speedily will slow the pace of economic development. But many African leaders seem to have a mature awareness of these dangers. There are now more Europeans employed in Ghana than before its independence; the Sudan, first Sudanizing too rapidly, has more recently tried to rehire many of its former British civil servants. It may be expected, however, that African nations will wish to secure foreign advisers and

technicians from a variety of countries and to widen their contacts in international relations.

These factors, coupled with the inability of individual European and African nations to cope with the enormity of the task, suggest the desirability of involving other European and American nations in some organization concerned with African development, a subject, however, more appropriate for analysis by a political scientist.

The African association of the Common Market represents one effort to sustain and widen Eurafrican relations. It involves the association, for a five-year period, of the overseas territories of its member states. The chief benefits to the African territories involved are first, that it gives them a larger, protected market for their staples and, second, it makes available capital resources for development of their basic public services from nations which are not now making such contributions. The association should also radically alter the commercial relations between France and African members of the French Community by gradually eliminating the sale of goods to France at prices above those of the world market and purchase of goods from that country at prices often far above those prevailing in other countries. Unfortunately, however, British, Portuguese, Spanish, and some independent areas of sub-Saharan Africa are excluded from the EEC; this exclusion will, to some degree, increase their marketing problems and may easily introduce a new divisive force in Africa. It would be far more preferable to have a broader representation of both European and African countries, and better still, to work toward freer trade and greater fluidity of investment on a Free World basis. The United States could also benefit from and make a significant contribution through a more liberal trading position, one which recognizes more clearly that restrictions on world trade severely hamper underdeveloped nations.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the great impor-

tance of non-physical and non-economic forces in the processes of fragmentation and consolidation in Africa south of the Sahara. But, at the same time, the weight of the economic and geographic factors outlined above is equally if not in the long run more important. And, in the years ahead, Africans have the challenging opportunity to formulate policies and political divisions which are in consonance, and not in conflict, with them.

## AFRICA'S LAND

*Paul Bohannan*

THE MOST COMPELLING ISSUES in Negro Africa today are freedom and land. Land, like freedom, must be subject to some controls if it is to be usable and valuable. Again, land, like freedom, is subject to endless interpretations and disputes. Finally, with land, like freedom, the scarcer it is or the more uses that a civilization may have for it, the more vital and the more desirable it becomes.

The land-base of any society is one of the most fundamental considerations about it. The land-base of any rapidly changing society is, therefore, crucial, for the man-land relationship differs vastly from one kind of society to the next. This man-land relationship was the subject of detailed investigation by the original, inquiring mind of Sir Henry Sumner Maine in the late 19th century. No man of equal range or equivalent perception has enquired into the matter since, though we now know enough to provide the basis for a new, wide, and searching view of the whole issue of land and its place in society.

Sir Henry Maine was concerned specifically with problems of man-land relationships in rapidly changing societies. Since he was a jurist, he worked with the material most readily available to him—the codes of ancient and exotic peoples. His investigation of the changes in land-law which must come about when a society changes from a tribal or kinship to a village or locality-dominated form of government, or from a village form to a state form of government, are today about the only usable models which can be found in the tremendous literature on land in societies in flux.

The task before students of African land is a fairly easy one to outline, but will be extremely difficult to carry out. In short, the problem is this: the largest portions of Africa are proceeding from tribal forms of social organization to nation states and impersonal markets: colonialism has been, for the most part, merely a boost in that direction, a phase. Now, what are the changes in land tenure rules, in attitudes toward land, in economy, and all the other factors which such changes entail, and how are Africans managing them and responding to them?

## I

In order to answer such questions, it is necessary, first, for us to look into just what is demanded in the way of land law by the 20th-century, Western type of national state and by the relatively free market economy which Westerners have conjoined with it. That the junction of state and free market is not a necessary one we can see by looking at the Communist world. Yet the linking of these two features in the West has brought about a peculiar notion of land which we must examine if we are ever really to understand what other people with their completely different conceptions think and do about it.

Just what is it that Westerners mean by "land tenure"? To break the question down even further, what do we Westerners mean by "land," and what do we mean by "tenure"?

Every people, including ourselves, must have some view of the physical milieu—the "folk geography"—of the world and their part of it. It is instructive to pursue the Western ethnographic situation in the matter of conceptualization of "land." Westerners divided the earth's surface by use of an imaginary grid, itself subject to manipulations and re-definitions. We then plot the grid on paper or on a sphere, and the problem becomes one of correlating the physical features of the land and sea to this grid. We have developed instruments for lo-

cating ourselves on the earth's surface in relation to the position of the stars. There are precise rules for symbolizing the information from the instruments with which we do so and for transferring it to the gridded map. We have, for this and other purposes, perfected a system of measurement which allows us to repeat precisely operations which have been carried out in the past; thus we have been able to locate and measure pieces of the earth's surface, and to record our computations on maps. These measured pieces become, for some purposes at least, identifiable "things."

Land, whatever else it may also be, is for Westerners a measurable entity divisible into thing-like "parcels" by means of mathematical and technical processes of surveying and cartography based ultimately on astral position. This complex notion of "land," with its accompanying technology, is an absolute essential to the Western system of land tenure, as well as to the Western market-oriented economy.

When we come to the notion of "tenure" in our own system, we must unravel an even more tangled ambiguity. First of all, the notion of "tenure" assumes an idea of "land" of the sort we have already described. Only if it is divisible and the divisions precisely calculable and measurable can "land" be "held." Only if land is cut up into definable units can it enter the market or, as the jurist sees the same phenomenon, be subject to contract. Contract and a land market create specific types of relationship between men and land.

However, holding a piece of landed "property" in a society marked by a free market is more than a mere relationship between a man and a thing-like piece of land. As the best jurisprudential opinion has long told us, it is a relationship among persons. "Tenure" has to do with rights *in land against* or *with* other persons. Thus, in addition to the man-land unit, usually called a "property system" by Westerners, we have a man-man unit, usually referred to as part of the social system.

When we discuss the land question in terms of the social

system, we do so in terms of the word "rights." "Rights" are attributes of persons against other persons. But in European languages, with the particular notions of land they reflect, "rights in land" can become attributes of *the land*. This "land right" links a person and a piece of land. But the equation of rights of people with rights in land, making one the obverse of the other, does not happen in most African societies. Therefore, when we return from the Western to the African situation, we must ask how we can classify African attitudes to "land" and African versions of "tenure" in order to know just what sort of a revolution is taking place today.

## II

This question can be answered by generalizing the factors we have found so that they can guide us in working with several cultures at once. Three factors are involved: a concept of geography, a mode of correlating a man with his physical environment, and a social system with a spatial dimension. These factors can then be restated as axioms: (1) A people will have a representation of the country in which they live; that representation can be seen by the analyst in analogy to the Western map. (2) Members of any society have a set of concepts for speaking about and dealing with the relationships between themselves and the earth they exploit. (3) The spatial aspect of any social organization has some sort of overt expression in word and deed. The study of land in society is the way in which any people associates map, property, and spatial relationships.

It is, I believe, a fact that no African societies used indigenously an astrally based map such as our own, although a few peoples elsewhere, notably the Polynesians, did do so. Astral maps are, of course, sea-farers' maps. In the absence of a developed land market or of an aviation industry, there is seldom any need to apply sea-farers' maps to land masses.

However, a few African peoples did divide up the earth's

surface into pieces by using terrestrial landmarks. The Kikuyu of Kenya are a notable example; the Bahaya of Tanganyika are another. In spite of the differences in map and in social organization, the Kikuyu had a man-land unit which was more or less immediately translatable into Western property terms. The Kikuyu struggle has not been with changing types of property notions—although they have had that too with reference to land that Europeans considered empty—so much as it has been with ensuring stability of tenure by getting their land surveyed and recorded. The task of putting it onto an astral map so that English property law and the land market can be made precisely to apply to it was a relatively minor change from the standpoint of perception.

Far greater numbers of African societies, however, did not split land up into pieces at all. Here we shall mention only two other methods by which an area can be made into a socially recognizable "map." One of these is by a series of specific terrestrial points which are given particular recognition and either economic or ritual meaning by the people concerned. To quote two examples hurriedly, the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia, studied by Dr. Elizabeth Colson, hook their social organization to the earth *not* by means of anything we would ourselves consider land tenure, but by means of a set of rain shrines, each of which is associated with surrounding villages, and each of which is specifically placed on the earth—possibly but rarely subject to move on ritual authority. Opportunity to move from one village to another is very wide, and acceptance as a resident in a village automatically carries with it not only fealty to the shrine but a right to make a farm nearby on any land not farmed at the moment nor claimed as fallow by another resident. Tonga farms can be cultivated for five or six years before the soil is exhausted. Given this placement, Tonga can be seen to have short-term "farm tenure," as it were, in the village area near the shrine.

The Bedouin Arabs of Cyrenaica, studied by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, are another well documented example in which the tribal lands are attached to saints' graves or wells. Many pastoral societies and most of those who practice shifting cultivation see the land in this sort of association with society. The pastoral Fulani, with their long, sweeping cycles of movement, and the slash-and-burn peoples of the Congo forests, with their relatively short moves, can all be included in this classification.

In the other mode of connecting society to space, the social organization is conceived in terms of pure space, and is only incidentally linked with the physical environment by vicissitudes of farming or other land uses for very short periods of time. The Tiv of central Nigeria are an example of a farming people who are characteristic of this type. They see geography in the same image as they see social organization. The idiom of descent and genealogy provides not only the basis for lineage grouping, but also of territorial grouping. The Tiv group themselves according to a lineage system based on the principle of segmental opposition. Every "minimal lineage" is associated with a territory. This minimal lineage, two or three hundred men derived from a single ancestor, with their wives and daughters, is located spatially beside another of precisely the same sort—that is, descent from the brother of the ancestor of the first. In reference to the father of the two apical ancestors of the two minimal lineages, they form an inclusive lineage, and their territories form a spatial unit. This process continues genealogically for several generations, until all Tiv are included; it continues spatially until the entirety of Tivland is seen as a lineage area, segmenting into increasingly smaller lineage areas.

This "genealogical map" of Tivland moves about the surface of the earth in sensitive response to the demands of individual farmers as those demands change from year to year. The "map" in terms of which Tiv see their land is a genea-

logical map, and its association with specific pieces of ground is of only very brief duration—a man or woman has precise rights to a farm during the time it is in cultivation, but once the farm returns to fallow, the rights lapse. However, a man always has rights in the "genealogical map" of his agnatic lineage, wherever that lineage may happen to be in space. These rights, which are part of his birthright, can never lapse. A mathematician friend has suggested to me that whereas the Western map, based on surveys, resembles geometry, the Tiv notions resemble topology, which has been described as "geometry on a rubber sheet." The Western map is necessarily rigid and precise if the principle of contract is to work; the Tiv map is constantly changing both in reference to itself and in its correlation with the earth, thus allowing the principle of kinship grouping to work. For the Tiv, the position of a man's farm varies from one crop rotation to the next, but neither his juxtaposition with his agnatic kinsmen nor his rights change in the least. Tiv, like Tonga, might be said to have "farm tenure" but they do not have "land tenure."

Thus, instead of seeing their maps primarily in terms of man-thing units such as property, many Africans at least saw something like a map in terms of social relationships in space. They thus axiomized, so to speak, the spatial aspect of their social groups and provided themselves with a social map, so that they were left free to question the ways in which they attached either social groups or individuals to exploitative rights in the earth. Usually they were imprecise, group membership being the valued quality. Westerners, on the other hand, axiomize their map in terms of their property norms and values, and see the social system which results as fundamentally a series of contracts and hence open to question. As a result, Westerners question the social system that lies behind land usage, while Africans question the property ideas associated with it.

## III

This relative inability on the part of Westerners to question whether or not a land system is in fact a property system—that is, the assumption that it always is, even if land does not enter the market—has led to the continued life of a silly concept called “communal ownership.” Now, in a fully developed, contractually oriented society like our own, communal ownership can and does exist. That is to say, the commune, whatever its nature, can be viewed as a jural person. As a corporation aggregate, it is capable of owning property under the law. The difficulty arises because this fiction has been used by many Westerners to make sense out of most African land systems. A more farcical situation is difficult to imagine.

Sir Henry Maine pointed out long ago that in a community based on kinship, the land is an aspect of the group, but *not* the basis of grouping. Notions of “communal ownership,” manipulated by people who assume property and market as the basis of society, have made the land the basis of grouping in a system in which spatial extension and concomitant rights to exploit the environment are mere aspects of the social group. The indigenous basis of grouping is kinship in some parts of Africa, while in others it is a village community similar to those Maine studied in India and Europe. In *no* place in Africa did the basis of grouping depend indigenously on contract.

Property, in the Western sense, and its resultant contractual relationships, are the fundamental basis of grouping in the Western type of national state. In a developed market economy, a land market emerges—with whatever agony to the people who must see it to fruition. Therefore, as African societies become Western-type national states, as they come to have more fully evolved market economies, the problem before them is how to preserve certain of their valued kinship

groups. Their answer is the same as the one found by some of the more prosperous of American Indian tribes such as the Osage. They are turning their kinship groups into corporations aggregate before the law. This means that they can both maintain at least some of the valued qualities of the kinship group at the same time that they are making themselves into corporations—sole or aggregate—which are the units of “modern societies,” based on contract and on the open market.

The Osage, when they struck oil, turned their tribe into a limited corporation under the laws of the State of Oklahoma. The Yoruba people in the Western Region of Nigeria are turning their extended-family compounds into land-holding units before the law, under the “Communal Land Rights (Vesting in Trustees) Law” of 1958.

This law, in brief, makes a matter of legal record the change in the nature of the Yoruba lineage group called the *ebi*, though it does so in legal language which eschews mention of the *ebi*. The *ebi* in traditional terms was an agnatic descent group which shared a common residence. Every quarter of every Yoruba town had several *ebi*, and on some occasions an *ebi* could split into two or more *ebi*. This body of agnatic kinsmen, with their wives, also had an estate—a more or less precisely determinable area within which they traditionally farmed, and which they protected from encroachment by others. Within the *ebi*, the members farmed not in specific places which they considered their own, but the group moved its farms about within the area so that they could remain as a unit to take advantage of the best soils and to control the system of fallowing. Nobody “owned” anything, but every member had a right to a farm sufficient to support his immediate dependents. These rights to a farm were inalienable. The *ebi* had a head and a council which ran the agricultural affairs of the *ebi* in a kind of committee.

This mode of spatial distribution and concomitant exploi-

tation of the environment leaves several things to be desired in the new society which has developed under colonialism and is fast breaking away from it. In the first place, it grants a man land rights *only* insofar as he is a part of a lineage. The moment he ceases to be an effective member of his lineage, he foregoes his land rights until he again becomes an effective member. Under modern conditions, Yoruba often want to remain members of their lineages, but also want to have land rights of a different sort. Sale of land, which was impossible in the old system because land was the spatial dimension of the *ebi* rather than a commodity which could be considered "property" and sold in the market, became desirable when the economic system changed in such a way as to make it feasible. Immediately, a sort of pull or pressure was set up between the *ebi* land unit and the individual. Either a man must cease being an individual in the new system, or the *ebi* land unit, as an institution, had to go.

"The Communal Land Rights (Vesting in Trustees) Law" is a legal mechanism by means of which this particular difficulty has been solved. European analysis of Yoruba land tenure has, from the beginning, classed the *ebi*'s spatial dimension as "land owned in communal tenure." The *ebi* is certainly a community of sorts, and since it was associated with land, the European notion of "tenure" was automatically applied without question as to whether it applied or not. This assumption had the result of turning the *ebi*, in European eyes, into a corporation aggregate before the law. With this European analysis in terms of legal corporations, a subtle change was introduced. The Europeans, in the legal system they fostered, gave the *ebi* a legal reality which it formerly had not possessed. From being only a social group, it now became a legal entity. Yoruba were a bit late in recognizing what had happened. But since they did recognize it, they and their legislators have seen in it a means of preserving the *ebi* as a social group fulfilling the basic needs of what we would

call social insurance and community center at the same time that they have strengthened the modern institution of private property.

Thus, in the indigenous system, the *ebi* did not "own" land communally or any other way. Rather, it was a social group with a spatial dimension. This vital difference was recognized by Sir Henry Maine and was vividly described by him. Later scholars have usually forgotten it. In the modern system, the *ebi* of the Yoruba has been turned into a legal entity, before the laws of Nigeria, and can *therefore* "own" land. "Communal land ownership" assumes that the commune is, before the law, the same sort of unit as the individual. That idea has penetrated Yoruba cultural values and, indeed, communal land ownership under the law is actually taking place.

The legal mechanisms of the West have for centuries been the device by means of which Westerners have had their cake at the same time they have eaten it. Therein lies its strength. The peoples of the Western Region of Nigeria are now, in fact, preserving at least a part of their traditional culture by means of this Western legal form. I think it likely that we can find a great many more instances in which fragmented values which have resulted from the flooding of African society with new ideas have been reconsolidated by a legal device. The Western genius today is a legal one. A legal context is also one that is, by cultural tradition, congenial to most Africans. The result is that we see before us the spread of Western law with the concomitant salvation of many of the indigenous institutions which Africans find valuable.

## THE DUAL REALITY OF PORTUGUESE AFRICA

*James Duffy*

IN 1960 THE FRONTIERS of crisis and change in Africa have swept from the equator to the Cape of Good Hope. The emergence of an independent Congo nation, the failure of white supremacy in the Central African Federation, the murders committed by the Nationalist government's troops and police in the Union of South Africa tell the end of a European order in those parts of the continent. Whatever may happen now in these areas, it is clear they will not be the same again. But there remain, apart from the protectorates of Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland, two large territories whose seeming resistance to the forward march of events in the rest of Africa is both perplexing and, to many, exasperating. How is it, the question is asked again and again, that the Portuguese in Angola and Moçambique have, for the while at least, succeeded in Africa where the Englishmen, the Belgians, and the Afrikaners have failed?

European success at self-preservation in Africa is at best ephemeral in 1960, and there are well-founded suspicions that the surface calm of the two largest Portuguese colonies in Africa is deceptive. Demonstrations in Lourenço Marques, the capital of Moçambique, in early 1959; trouble along the Congo frontier in late 1959; the wholesale arrests of Africans and Portuguese in both areas; and the strengthening of army garrisons and navy patrols in Angola—all give evidence that not even Portuguese Africa is immune to the ills and aspirations of the continent. And for what is *not* happening in Angola and Moçambique there are valid reasons. The isolat-

tion and ignorance in which the two areas have been plunged for centuries go a long way to explain the apparent present harmony. The absolute and often ruthless control the Salazar dictatorship exercises over the African and Portuguese population will also help explain the absence of any very visible dissent. Portugal is a police state in Africa as well as in Europe.

But the plain fact stands out that what has happened, good or bad, in Kenya, in Ghana, in Guinea, in the Congo, and in South Africa has not yet happened in Angola or Moçambique, or, for that matter, in the lesser Portuguese provinces of São Tomé, Guinea, and the Cape Verdes. Why? Why is it that when for one hundred and fifty years, at least, a considerable body of opinion, Portuguese, European, and American, has roundly condemned Portuguese practices in Africa, Portugal should still command, so it seems, the loyalties of the majority of the population? The nature of much of the evidence accumulated over the years contains every reason for African disaffection with the Portuguese cause, for African resentment, for nationalistic sentiments, and perhaps for violence. What, then, is out of joint?

## I

The trouble with Portuguese Africa is that the outside world has never been able to see it very clearly. In one way or another we have all been led—sometimes we have led ourselves—down the garden path by foreign or Portuguese views of the two colonies. There are fundamentally two broad images of Portuguese Africa (each with its lesser images) which have been uncritically accepted by almost everyone who has concerned himself with those parts of the continent. The two images seem to be so antithetically opposed that if one is right, then the other is surely wrong. Certainly the two images do not coincide, but what few people have realized is that each contains elements which are indisput-

ably true, and that these elements, when put together and viewed from a thoughtful perspective, make up a total picture of Portuguese Africa which approximates the reality, historical and present, and leads to a possible understanding of the state of affairs there in 1960. The truth in Africa, as elsewhere, is usually complex, and what is easy to believe about Portuguese Africa is not always right.

The first, and most popularly accepted, image of Portuguese Africa is that of a great slave camp whose peoples historically have been sold down the river by the millions and presently are exploited mercilessly by an oppressive labor code and a corrupt colonial administration. This concept of Angola and Moçambique began to form in the first decades of the 19th century when impatient English humanitarians and early exponents of British imperialism in southern Africa, like Commodore William F. Owen, took Portugal to task for her dedication to the slave trade. Through the century the image took definitive shape in the writings and speeches of Thomas Buxton, Palmerston, Livingstone, Cameron, Selous, Lugard, and Rhodes. (That a number of liberal Portuguese statesmen shared this predominantly English view and that distinguished English travelers like Sir Harry Johnston and Mary Kingsley frequently contradicted it mattered little, especially in the last years of the century when official English policy in southern Africa found it more and more convenient to exploit the image to justify despoiling Portugal of territory nominally Portuguese.) In the 20th century, the reports of Henry W. Nevinson, William Cadbury, and the American sociologist Edward Ross, and the later writings of men like Basil Davidson and Marvin Harris, have given the familiar picture of neo-slavery under the guise of contract labor.

The second image of Angola and Moçambique is essentially a Portuguese creation, although it has defenders elsewhere. In this picture, Portuguese Africa is a community of

black and white and a few brown brothers (or sometimes of white fathers and black children) living in spiritual harmony and contentment. Here there are no tensions because there are no racial problems. This state of human equality has been achieved, it is argued, through the Portuguese tolerance of peoples of different colors and cultures and through the uniquely Portuguese dedication to Christian, not materialistic, values. This image, difficult to define but very real in the Portuguese consciousness, has been most eloquently elaborated by spokesmen for the Salazar dictatorship's African policy, but its elements are mostly historical. The Portuguese program of diplomatic alliance, not conquest, in the Congo in the early 16th century; the example of the Negro Bishop Henrique; the practice of domestic association with African women; an intensive missionary activity; a Negro governor-general of Portuguese Guinea; and the policy of assimilation—all contribute to the formation of an extraordinarily pervasive and deeply rooted view of Portuguese Africa. (That Angola and Moçambique have had their fair share of racists, whose hard-headed policies have been closely followed by the Salazar regime, has not substantially changed the evolving mystique of the Portuguese presence in Africa.) To illustrate the reasons for their success in Africa, the Portuguese like to tell a story. An Englishman was fishing in a river when an African came and demanded the fishing pole. The Englishman gave it to him, went downstream, and sat down on the bank to smoke his pipe. The African fell into the water. As the current carried him past the Englishman, he called for help, but the Englishman sat smoking his pipe and watched him drown. Later a Portuguese came to fish in the same stream. When another African came up to demand the pole, the Portuguese gave him a blow and went on fishing. The African went upstream where he fell into the water. As the current carried him past the Portuguese, the latter jumped into the river and saved him. The teller

of the story does not usually consider that it may have other interpretations.

## II

No more perceptive analysis of Portuguese Africa exists than in David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857). Livingstone saw clearly, as no one had before him, Portuguese or foreign, and as few writers have since, the dual reality of Portuguese Africa. His account is indispensable for anyone seriously interested in Angola and Moçambique: it is one of the handful of travel classics by which all subsequent accounts of a given area are measured and found wanting. Livingstone recognized the devastations of the slave trade in both colonies, and his irritation with the Portuguese who pursued it increased as he made his historic way across the continent. But *Missionary Travels* has not the obsessive concern for slavery one finds in the doctor's second account of travels in Portuguese Africa, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi*, and in the first book his censure is more than matched by his praise for the Portuguese practices of assimilation. "Nowhere else in Africa," he writes, "is there so much goodwill between European and native as here." A balanced, scrupulously honest appraisal of Portuguese Africa, Livingstone's work has long furnished ammunition to defenders of both views of Portuguese Africa, but it has, I suspect, completely satisfied neither.

In England and America, however, no one read the *Missionary Travels*, and even less the *Narrative of an Expedition*, for praise of Portuguese goodwill. Livingstone's pronouncements on the slave trade and slavery were what caught the public eye—and public indignation. Without meaning to, the Scottish doctor had summed up an English humanitarian attitude toward Portuguese Africa and given shape to another hundred years of criticism of Portuguese misconduct there. Which was a pity. Although Livingstone's remarks on Portu-

guese slaving habits and most of the subsequent literature exploiting the same vein were in essence accurate—for the image of Angola and Moçambique as slave camps has much in truth to recommend it—the intense preoccupation with but one aspect of the two colonies has obscured other revealing characteristics which also contribute to their present condition. Livingstone himself had many things to say about the decadence of Portuguese Africa, but later critics, in their fascination with the labor situation, have largely ignored them. What they have not pondered is that the social and economic effects of slavery and contract labor have been as important as the institutions themselves.

Angola and Moçambique, by the middle of the 19th century, were two hundred years beyond the apogee of their wealth and influence. Angola was virtually slaved out and Moçambique existed in a state of splendid corruption and confusion. Of the two colonies, Livingstone had more to hope for in Angola, where there seemed to be some sense of facing present responsibilities and looking to the future; Moçambique he found derelict and beyond redemption. In neither colony did he find industry worthy of the name; possibilities for agriculture abounded ("a providential invitation to forsake the slave trade"), particularly in Angola, but little was being done. Commerce was erratic and uncertain, although it did provide the only real contact with the interior. The administration of both colonies left much to be desired. Missionary influence had vanished, and the African and the Portuguese beyond the few cities lived in a spiritual vacuum. Education was nonexistent and medical services unheard of. The attachment to the slave trade and slavery had, in Livingstone's eyes, rendered all other development and progress impossible.

All this was, for the date, not a surprising picture; the other outposts of Europe in Africa could hardly have put forth a better face in the 1850's. Only when the years pass and the

picture remains unchanged do Livingstone's observations take on greater significance. The reality of Portuguese Africa in 1855 is almost completely the reality of 1890, which is largely the reality of 1920, which is substantially the reality of 1940, which is pretty much the reality of 1960. The progress of Portuguese Africa in the last one hundred years, though startling perhaps in comparison with changes in the previous two centuries, has been slow. Cities and railroads have been built, harbors dredged, and estate agriculture encouraged, but the condition of the African has remained the same. Ignored or exploited, the majority of the African population exists in the same degraded state as always. The compensations for his forced labor, which is, in the words of Basil Davidson, "the economic flywheel" of Portuguese Africa, are minimal. Most of the Africans in both colonies are underpaid, underfed, and underclad. Portugal is poor, of course; her governments are generally shaky or despotic; and the material resources of Angola and Moçambique are scanty—all of which contribute to the maintaining of the tradition of cheap forced labor. But also traditional, either by accident or design, is Portuguese unwillingness or inability to accept a disinterested responsibility for African welfare. The paternalistic gestures of the Salazar government in building model infirmaries and colonization projects are totally inadequate. No real attempt has been made to make African agriculture a productive part of the colonies' economic life, gaudy appearances and statistics to the contrary. No real attempt has been made, or is being made, to raise the quality and capacity of education. Medical services remain, for the most part, on a primitive level. In industry and in the crafts and trades, the economic advance of the African is blocked by the burgeoning immigration of Portuguese peasants and workers into the colonies. In almost every direction the African's opportunity to break with the unrewarding patterns of the past is sharply circumscribed. The

African's obligation to labor in the cane fields, fisheries, and coffee plantations, and on the docks and roads is but one segment of the perpetual circle of the African reality. It is the total image of ignorance, poverty, and sickness, not merely the incidence of forced labor, which will help explain the present apparent absence of militant nationalism in Angola and Moçambique.

### III

But, the Portuguese say, even while admitting the truth of much of this picture, their policies in Africa have always been illuminated by the light of the spirit. Thus many Portuguese choose to regard their presence in Africa as a mission and their conduct there as an example. Even Livingstone, they point out, admitted that their relationship with the African did credit to their hearts. The associations of peoples, they argue, is more than material; it is an affair of the heart. We regard the African, the Portuguese say, as a fellow human being. As good Christians and as men we love him, and that love is generally returned.

Just as the limited image of Portuguese Africa as a slave camp does not offer the whole story, so the image of Portuguese Africa as a multiracial paradise leaves something wanting. But it is not all wrong, and critics of Portuguese policies in Africa have not really strengthened their condemnations by ignoring the easy rapprochement the Portuguese have always enjoyed with a small section of the African population. (On the other hand, Portuguese apologists have not strengthened their defense of Portuguese practices in Africa by attempting to sum up their presence there only in such generalities as "Our black brothers" and "The Portuguese soul knows no color.") Unquestionably, there has always been a unique quality to the Portuguese penetration of the overseas world, whether in India, China, America, or Africa. Roughly defined, that quality has been their ability to coexist with

peoples of other races. It is a quality which in recent years has been exalted out of all proportion to its influence, but it is a vital factor in the history of the Portuguese expansion.

Because of their tolerance, even acceptance, of other cultures, the ability to live and marry with peoples of other races, the Portuguese maintain that the fragments of their country's empire will be forever Portuguese—in sentiment, if not in fact. It is difficult to speak against this assertion. Macao, the Portuguese enclaves in the Indian subcontinent, and the Portuguese half of the island of Timor (to which President Sukarno has promised to lay no claim) have not, conspicuously, been scenes of nationalist discontent. The peoples of these eastern outposts seem quite happy with their Portuguese attachment. The multiracial society of Brazil, with its relative absence of racial tensions—though not always of discrimination—is a still larger example of what the Portuguese mean when they speak of their successful colonizing ways.

The Portuguese performance in these parts of the world has been, to a reduced extent, their performance in Angola and Moçambique. Even in the 1890's, when Portugal felt obliged to imitate English and German colonial methods, and in the 1950's, when a white immigration began to create new attitudes of racial intolerance, Portuguese Africa did not succumb to racist policies—although, it might be argued, economic policies had the same effect. Traditionally, the Portuguese in Angola and Moçambique have been willing to accept the African they came in contact with, either on their terms or on his. Until very recently the mulatto and the assimilated African not only enjoyed the same restricted privileges all Portuguese citizens enjoy, but they could move more or less at will in Portuguese society. Certain levels of the administrative hierarchy and the social world were closed to them, but beyond these limitations there was slight political or social restraint. If the African was willing to put aside his

native ways, he found that the Portuguese accepted him as a brother, or at least as a poor relation. For centuries the accessibility of the Portuguese world to a small number of Africans tempered conflict and served as a useful safety valve for African ambitions. A tradition was created which the Portuguese in Angola and Moçambique can exploit with some success even today. It is this tradition which is the nucleus for their overblown image of the Portuguese African reality and leads them to judge the whole on the basis of a very small part.

Portuguese Africa is not Goa, it is not Macao or Timor, it is certainly not Brazil. In these lands a racial composite has been formed during the past four hundred years—one must remember that the African was as much an immigrant to Brazil as the Portuguese—and with it have emerged understandable allegiances to Portuguese or neo-Portuguese values. This has not happened in Angola and Moçambique; it could never have happened given the small minority of Portuguese settlers and administrators there. Even without the growing pressures of nationalism, the simple ratio of Africans (11 million) to Portuguese (perhaps 210,000) makes the triumph of Portuguese policies of assimilation impossible. The vast majority of Africans in both colonies are beyond any close contact with Portuguese life and thought save for the necessity to labor on Portuguese estates and projects. In this century, Portugal has made every attempt to break the political structure of the African peoples and to replace it with her own harshly paternalistic control (the assimilated African may be a brother, but the *indígena* is only a child), but apart from this extension of Portuguese influence, any success in drawing the African into the Portuguese sphere is scarcely visible. Although the Portuguese world in Angola and Moçambique is not entirely white, there is also a vastly larger African world which is entirely black. Between them the frontier hardens.

Only when one realizes the dual reality of Portuguese

Africa do many contradictions become resolved or, at least, explained. No other area of Africa has drawn such diverse commentary. There are the critics of contract labor, but there have also been those who made the expression, "Only the Portuguese know how to treat the native," a cliché in Africa. For those who have applauded the racial tolerance of the Portuguese, there have been others to denounce their practices of "going native." Such has been the nature of foreign commentary, but the Portuguese themselves seem no less confused about their African world. While professing their absolute lack of color discrimination, they put signs reading "Right of admission reserved" on the doors of hundreds of establishments in Angola and Moçambique. At the theoretically mixed colonization project at Guija in Moçambique, the Portuguese immigrants live in neat little concrete villages and the Africans live in thatched huts. Each Portuguese family receives five hectares of tillable land and twenty-five for grazing, while the African receives two and twelve hectares—because, the Portuguese say, he does not know how to use his land as well as the white man! A Portuguese newspaper editor in Moçambique will simultaneously denounce racial discrimination at a Lourenço Marques hotel and score the colonial government's policy of setting aside valuable land for the African reserves.

## IV

What is the future of such a seemingly perverse relationship between the two peoples? Inconsistent though Portuguese behavior may seem, its value has been proved by the centuries. Angola and Moçambique are the oldest European colonies in the world today, and their history is largely the history of the *status quo*—the enslaving of many and the assimilation of a few. Recent events have shown that almost every step taken by the Europeans in Africa to preserve their control has been the wrong step. The Salazar government obviously

prefers to take no steps and would probably like to get off the road altogether, for it leads in but one direction in Africa today, and that is toward independence. But what has been true in the past and is mostly true in the present may well turn out not to be true in the future.

Perhaps it is that history has at last caught up with Portuguese Africa. Only a world catastrophe can divert attention from the shrinking areas of colonialism in the continent. As each goes under, the pressures mount on the remaining pockets of resistance, and room for maneuver diminishes. The present Portuguese regime would prefer to live in ancient isolation in Africa, to be left alone, to solve its own problems in its own way in its own time, to solve them, the Portuguese insist, in peace. Criticism and meddling from outside, they say, can only disturb a traditional relationship and create needless hostilities; it must be exposed. Criticism from within, allegedly misinformed and badly intentioned, can produce the same result and must be dealt with summarily. Hence the rhetoric in the United Nations, hence the swelling population in Portuguese African jails and work camps. But verbalism and prisons are no cure for the advancing crisis. With each month that passes it becomes clearer that the Portuguese are trapped by the dual reality of their existence in Africa.

In the heyday of the Atlantic slave trade, a common remark was, "Without sugar there is no Brazil and without Angola there is no sugar." The contemporary fact is that without forced labor, no matter what it may be called, there is no Portuguese Africa. Within the Portuguese system, the economy and development of Angola and Moçambique cannot exist without it. (For that matter, the labor forces of the Union and the Rhodesias would be seriously diminished if the half million Africans who annually cross the borders of Moçambique were to stay at home.) The African population is too scattered; the compensations, educational and social as

well as financial, are too slight; and the weight of tradition is too heavy to make any system of free labor viable. A substantial rise in the production costs of Portuguese African goods—the first result of free competitive labor—would price them out of the market, to be sure; but the greatest reason for the preservation of the system, with all of its abuses and neglects, is that the majority of Portuguese in both colonies steadfastly refuses to consider alternatives. Forced labor is the easy answer—and its deleterious side effects, perhaps the Portuguese subconsciously realize, seem to blunt many of the African's aspirations.

As long as Portuguese Africa persists in her traditional ways, she will stand isolated, with the Union of South Africa, at the bar of world opinion. A solid bloc of Asian and African nations, joined by a growing number of other countries, has consistently moved to bring the case of Portuguese Africa before the United Nations, a move that has in the past been tacitly opposed by the United States. But this country's changing policies in Africa now seem to hold little future comfort for Portugal. At their meeting in Lisbon in May, Premier Salazar and President Eisenhower apparently spent as much time discussing the fate of Africa as they did peace in the world. The State Department is confronted with a dilemma: obviously we cannot have Portugal as an ally in Europe and as an enemy in Africa, but just as obviously we cannot have Portugal as an ally in Africa and still hope to win friends and influence people in the free nations there. The best the State Department can presently do is to increase the distance between this country and Portugal's policies in Africa and to suggest discreetly changes in these policies. Any serious change in American sympathies for the Portuguese position could have important repercussions.

But it is not likely that diplomacy will provide the first serious changes in the Angolan picture. The Congo-Angola frontier is a long one; across it there has been a flow of Afri-

cans into the Congo and back. In recent years there have been perhaps as many as a million Angolans working and living in the Congo. The Congo is no longer in the hands of respectable and sympathetic Belgians, and, manifestly, no African government in the Congo will be receptive to the exploitation of fellow Africans in the neighboring land. The traffic of men, ideas, and even arms into Angola seems a certainty. There the degradations of centuries will provide an explosive fuel for the fires of nationalism. Following the Brussels conference in January of this year, the fate of Angola became problematical. And what has happened in the Belgian Congo may well happen in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, with the same effects in Moçambique.

The numbers of assimilated Africans, a safety valve in the past, would appear to be too small to mitigate the inevitable crisis, especially since many of them are currently harassed by colonial police. By almost any measure, the formal policy of assimilation has been a failure in the last twenty-five years; the Portuguese in Angola and Moçambique have reaped far greater benefits from that informal assimilation which they have practiced for centuries. But even this other face of Portuguese Africa cannot contemplate the future with optimism. The hardening of a color consciousness under the impact of a heavy white immigration is now depriving the Portuguese of whatever advantages their tolerance gave them in the past. Portugal, which tried to promote white immigration into Angola and Moçambique for two hundred years and at last succeeded in the 1940's and 1950's, is learning that the more white brothers one brings into the family, the more one's troubles increase. Never have the Portuguese needed the celebrated goodwill of the African more than in 1960; never have they had so little of it.

The Salazar government has no delusions about the storms that lie ahead. This is a government which is expansive only in speech; in action it is harsh and cautious. To retain her

hold on Angola and Moçambique, Portugal must guard two fronts. Abroad, she must counter criticism with convincing arguments that what people say about Portuguese Africa is not so. At home and in Africa, she must see that these arguments have no practical reality, and that anyone trying to give them reality is protected from his folly. What this roughly means is that the Portuguese government must replace the first image of Portuguese Africa—that of a slave camp—with the second—that of a multiracial paradise. To accomplish the miracle, the regime, with the cooperation of a number of Pan-Lusitanian Brazilians, has begun to build up the concept of a Portuguese-Brazilian community, a sort of spiritual commonwealth. Brazil, of course, formerly a Portuguese colony, is the key and the example of the conception. In Angola and Moçambique, the restrictions that keep eleven million Africans from being what the Portuguese government implies they are, *i.e.*, citizens, may soon be eliminated, making the entire population of the two regions citizens in fact and giving greater paper substance to Portugal's claims that the two territories are Portuguese provinces, which in present fact they are not. With the creation of this Lusitanian community, made up of Brazil, continental Portugal, and overseas Portugal, the government may feel that its foreign critics will have been answered.

But in Africa the results of these elaborate machinations, if they do come to pass, will mean little. A mythical community will hardly satisfy the African's desire for freedom and dignity. The right to vote for a hand-picked candidate in a meaningless election will not convince the African that he has achieved independence, while the continuing lack of social progress will hardly convince him that he has achieved dignity and health. The problems of Portuguese Africa can no longer be solved by fanciful legislation and the goodwill of a handful of Portuguese and Africans. Independence may not provide the solution, but there can be no solution without it.

## ON THE APPLICATION OF THE WESTMINSTER MODEL TO GHANA

*Donald S. Rothchild*

A NATION CAN DO NO MORE than give of its best. For Britain, with centuries of accumulated knowledge in the art of constitutional government, this could only mean, in the political sphere, the application of her parliamentary system to her colonies. To do otherwise would have been tantamount to advocating a form of polity which the British would have considered inferior to their own. And the British, ever conscious of their grave responsibility as trustee, were anxious to guard against any such condescending step.

The application of the Westminster pattern of democracy to Ghana was, therefore, an act of faith both in British institutions and in the feasibility of their export. But how has this application worked out in practice? The time is ripe for an examination of the problems and prospects involved in the transfer of British political forms to the newly emergent African territories.

### I

It seems clear that the centripetal forces brought into play by the Westminster system coincided neatly with the needs of the Nkrumah Government as it took over the reins of authority on March 6, 1957. The Nkrumah administration ruled as a consequence of the majority position held by the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) in a freely-elected parliament. As long as the C.P.P. maintained its discipline over the rank and file of its supporters in the legislature, the executive was assured a wide latitude in its policy formulations.

This flexibility of movement was vitally significant to Dr. Nkrumah and his colleagues. Had his Government not been accorded sufficient authority from the outset, he might have failed to meet the responsibilities of self-government, responsibilities made more pressing by the fact that the ability of African nations to take the strain of independence in the modern age was yet to be conclusively demonstrated.

Consequently, the "energetic" executive provided for in the Ghanaian Constitution proved of great usefulness in the early years following the grant of independence. It enabled the Nkrumah Government to meet the three major challenges facing its administration: the need for leadership, the need for national unity, and the possible threat of internal subversion.

In assessing the proper role of the chief executive in an underdeveloped country such as Ghana, one must recognize from the outset the unusual pressures which are built up in the period following independence. "However poor the country," observes Prime Minister Nkrumah, "the new government cannot sit and do nothing. Construction must begin. There must be something to show for independence. And if there is nothing to show, popular discontent may split the country apart."<sup>1</sup> The leader, in short, must offer leadership. If he fails to take the helm in the stormy period following independence, he risks the safety of his ship. No wonder, then, that so many Africans stress the necessity of strong government under present-day conditions—even though it may be at the expense of representative government in the short run.<sup>2</sup> The situation which the chief executive inherits casts him into a position where he must offer dramatic, personal leadership.

Certainly the challenge of national unity is one that the

<sup>1</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, "African Prospect," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVII (October, 1958), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> See *West Africa*, April 4, 1959, p. 313.

leader of a newly emergent African country must meet following independence. As long as the imperial power controls the colonial dependency, there is little likelihood of secession. However, independence brings tribal, religious, and racial tensions to the fore. The national leader must strike swiftly against any movements aimed against national unity or he faces the possibility of "Pakistanism" on a wide scale. "The problem which faced the [Ghanaian] Government immediately upon the grant of independence was how to prevent the development of a type of tribalism which would have split the country up into mutually antagonistic fragments based upon ethnic or religious groupings."<sup>3</sup> The violence which occurred in Togoland and Ashanti after independence impelled the Government to act, to demonstrate that Ghana was in fact a united country. Had Dr. Nkrumah failed to meet this test, the whole question of the feasibility of African self-rule would have been reopened for international debate.

The possible threat of internal subversion, including assassination, is a direct consequence of the failure to instill an overriding sense of loyalty both to the nation and to the constitutional process instituted following independence. A fluid situation exists, calling for individualized—perhaps even "charismatic"<sup>4</sup>—leadership. While the Nkrumah Government appears at times to be supersensitive to the threat of revolutionary activities, there have been good grounds for caution in the past. Following the arrest and detention in November, 1958, of forty-three members of the United party (including the chairman and all the members of the Accra branch executive) for plotting to assassinate Nkrumah and overthrow his Government,<sup>5</sup> Ghana was rocked with the al-

<sup>3</sup> Statement by the Government on the Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Matters Disclosed at the Trial of Captain Benjamin Awhaitey . . . , W.P. No. 10/59 (Accra, 1959), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion in David E. Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 303-308.

<sup>5</sup> See *Daily Graphic* (Accra), November 11, 1958, p. 1. Soon after this in-

leged exposure of another plot, led this time by two prominent members of the Opposition, Mr. R. R. Amponsah and Mr. M. K. Apaloo, to assassinate the Prime Minister and take over the reins of government by a *coup d'état*. To allay international suspicions of arbitrary arrest, the Government presented its findings against Messrs. Amponsah and Apaloo before an impartial commission of enquiry. After holding exhaustive hearings, the commissioners found unanimously that "Mr. Amponsah and Mr. Apaloo since June, 1958, were engaged in a conspiracy to carry out at some future date in Ghana an act for an unlawful purpose, revolutionary in character."<sup>6</sup> Although the chairman, Mr. G. Granville Sharp, dissented from the findings of the other two commissioners, who charged that these Opposition members were engaged in their conspiratorial activities at the time of arrest,<sup>7</sup> world opinion, nevertheless, was quieted by the realization that there were very real grounds for governmental watchfulness in Ghana. The attempted assassination of Kassim in Iraq, the murder of Bandaranaike in Ceylon, and past experiences with turbulence in Ghana (in Ashanti and elsewhere) all give ominous warnings that violence can erupt quickly; the resulting climate, however, is not particularly conducive to the smooth functioning of a constitutional system.

## II

It seems evident from the previous discussion that an "energetic" executive is well adapted to a country which has just attained self-government. Such an executive is possessed of the authority necessary to meet the full panoply of challenges to leadership. However, where this flexibility is not accompanied by a milieu in which the traditions of constitutional-

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cident occurred, Dr. Nkrumah himself took over the Ministry of Interior. *Daily Graphic* (Accra), November 17, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ghana. Report of the Commission appointed under the Commission of Enquiry Ordinance (Cap. 249)*, (Accra, 1959), p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

ism are generally understood and practiced, there will be every likelihood of an extension of state activities into realms otherwise beyond the appropriate constitutional sphere.

In the period following Ghana's attainment of independence, the world press focused, not always sympathetically,<sup>8</sup> upon that Government's passage and use of a host of laws which had the effect of increasing its powers to interfere with the personal liberties of the people living in Ghana. No doubt these laws were inspired in the first instance by the Government's legitimate concern to deal with lawlessness and violence within Ghana; nevertheless, they caused real fears about the future course of democracy (*i.e.*, limited government)<sup>9</sup> in that country.

One of the most important of these measures, the Preventive Detention Act, was passed into law in July, 1958. The Government alleged that its purpose was to provide a safeguard against revolutionary-inspired actions. In presenting the bill to Parliament, Prime Minister Nkrumah declared that ". . . the Bill has been deliberately drafted so that the Government can deal resolutely and without delay with any attempt to subvert the State by force. The Government are determined not to be caught unprepared, as a number of other states have been, by subversion either from within or without."<sup>10</sup>

Critics of the Preventive Detention Act disputed this interpretation and claimed, instead, that the intent of its framers was to arm the executive with another political weapon. Opposition fire was directed at the propriety of permitting the Government to detain any citizen for a period up to five years—without appeal to an independent tribunal<sup>11</sup>—for

<sup>8</sup> See Kofi Baako's remarks at a press conference on June 23, 1959, in *Ghana and the Press* (Accra: Government Printer, 1959).

<sup>9</sup> See the excellent discussion of this in Gwendolen M. Carter, "A Political Scientist in Africa," *African Studies Bulletin*, II (December, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XI (July 14, 1958), col. 410.

<sup>11</sup> An appeal can, of course, be made in writing to the Governor-General,

acting "in a manner prejudicial" to Ghana's domestic security or international relations. "With these powers in the hands of the Prime Minister he holds everyone in this country to ransom,"<sup>12</sup> Mr. J. A. Braimah contended. And his colleagues on the Opposition benches were every bit as apprehensive.

What effects have the passage of this act had in Ghana? According to an interview, Simon D. Dombo, the Opposition leader, held with the press in November, 1959, some seventy members of the United party had been jailed as of that date under authority of this act.<sup>13</sup> The vagueness of its terminology, coupled with its frequent use, has made the Preventive Detention Act a symbol of the Government's power—a power which all Ghanaians not in sympathy with the present administration feel is arbitrary power. Over and over again, I noted the uneasiness with which Ghanaians regarded this act; and I could not help but conclude that, as far as Ghanaian subjects are concerned, this act marked a very real increase in governmental power, and a consequent erosion of their own security.

Whereas the Nkrumah Government relied largely on the Preventive Detention Act to curb suspected subversive activities where subjects of Ghana were involved, the Government made extensive use of its power of deportation when aliens domiciled in Ghana were regarded as undesirables. In explaining the reasons for its actions, the Government usually stated that the deportees' further presence in Ghana was not "conducive to the public good." The looseness of such formulas naturally gave rise to Opposition protests. Thus the former Opposition leader, Dr. Kofi Busia (who has since fled Ghana for safe sanctuary in the Netherlands), maintained that the April, 1958, deportation of nine Africans from Kumasi

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but that, in practice, means appealing to the Government responsible for the detention in the first place.

<sup>12</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Ghana)*, XI (July 14, 1958), col. 417.

<sup>13</sup> *New York Times*, November 23, 1959, p. 10.

was "no doubt for political ends."<sup>14</sup> Certainly the line between "hooliganism" and partisan activities can be a thin one at times. But if the Government employs powers like that of deportation to harrass those non-Ghanaians who criticize the regime (such as the respected deputy editor of the *Ghana Daily Graphic*, Mr. Bankole Timothy), then an atmosphere of tension is created which is not likely to encourage the flowering of a liberal democracy.

Further laws of some potential significance with respect to civil liberties in Ghana have followed the report of the Granville Sharp Commission. This report, which concluded that two of the leading members of the Opposition had been active, since June, 1958, in a revolutionary conspiracy led the Government to make known its intentions of bringing the laws on treason and sedition "into line with modern requirements."<sup>15</sup> Parliament thereupon approved the "Investigation of Crime" Act, which broadened the Attorney-General's authority to compel any subject to supply information where crimes against the state were involved. It also passed the "Offenses against the State" Act, giving judges the authority to jail for periods of up to fifteen years persons convicted of making false reports about Ghana. But possibly the most significant of the laws intended to punish subversive activities will be the recently-introduced Sedition Bill itself. This bill provides for the imprisonment (for periods ranging up to fifteen years in length) of persons who are found guilty of intentionally exhorting the overthrow of the Government by illegal means or of inciting contempt of the Government or of the judicial branch. Clearly the import of these new laws is to make every person in Ghana realize that the Government has the authority to act in order to maintain the peace, security, and well-being of Ghana, and it is prepared to use its powers wherever necessary.

<sup>14</sup> *West Africa*, April 12, 1958, p. 343.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, W.P. No. 10/59, p. 48. See also *Daily Graphic* (Accra), June 4, 1959, p. 7.

## III

At the time the Ghanaian Constitution was conceived, many observers felt that it included all the restraints necessary for its own preservation. "Every safeguard which can reasonably be included in it is there," declared a lead editorial in the magazine *West Africa*, ". . . and a list of its safeguards is a charter of civil liberties."<sup>16</sup> The omission of a Bill of Rights would appear to be a glaring oversight,<sup>17</sup> but that the intention of the framers was to provide effective restraints on governmental action seems clear, nonetheless.

If they depended on any single check on governmental power, surely the framers must have relied upon the establishment and maintenance of an effective Opposition. In this they have been disappointed. The issue of national independence is still too fresh in the popular memory to allow of two parties equally sanctioned by the public.<sup>18</sup> The C.P.P. is still the voice of national salvation, compelling the United party to turn to disgruntled groups on the periphery for its main support. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the very concept of an Opposition has little place within the context of African history or experience.<sup>19</sup> The consequence of this is to compound the problem of adapting parliamentary democracy to a non-Western country such as Ghana.<sup>20</sup>

The plight of the Opposition can be seen in its decline in numbers and influence. Various Opposition groups (later to

<sup>16</sup> *West Africa*, March 2, 1957, p. 193. See also *The Proposed Constitution of Ghana*, Cmnd. 71 (London, 1957), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> See speech by J. A. Braimah in *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XI (July 2, 1958), col. 38.

<sup>18</sup> See Julius Nyerere, "Will Democracy Work in Africa," *Africa Special Report*, V (February, 1960), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Mr. J. H. Price observed that ". . . the concept of parliamentary opposition was so remote from West African traditional thought that the [word] 'opposition' can only be translated into the majority of Ghanaian languages as 'enemy' . . .," in *What are the problems of Parliamentary Government in West Africa*, Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government (London, 1958), p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97. The recurrent rumors of serious cleavages within the C.P.P. should not be overlooked.

be consolidated into the United party) secured thirty-three out of 104 seats in the 1956 general election. By November, 1959, only eighteen members remained on the Opposition side of the aisle. Moreover, the number of Opposition members desiring to cross to the Government side may have increased to the point, as one observer claimed in 1958, that the C.P.P. found it to be inexpedient to allow any further attempts to join its ranks.<sup>21</sup> It is indeed a sad commentary upon the state of democracy in Ghana that the majority party might seek to uphold the appearance of a functioning two-party system by refusing to admit disillusioned Opposition party members to its midst.

But neither of the main parties can be held solely responsible for the present low repute of the Opposition. The Government, despite allegations of corrupt practices, has maintained free elections and has placed no restriction on Opposition criticism in Parliament. While repeated instances of violence have occurred at election time, the C.P.P. is by no means the only political group resorting to unconstitutional means to achieve its ends.

To be sure, the Government has harassed the members and supporters of the Opposition. It has imprisoned them under the Preventive Detention Act, deported them, dismissed them from employment, and withdrawn recognition from traditional authorities who backed them.<sup>22</sup> Dr. Nkrumah's much heralded effort to make the Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition a paid public official and his oft-proclaimed belief in the virtues of two-party democracy are not sufficient evidence in themselves of an enduring faith in an effective multi-party system. For as long as Government members regard ". . . the members opposite as no more than a group of unscrupulous men wanting to usurp their seats and of-

<sup>21</sup> Colin Legum, "Nkrumah Bids for Docker's Yacht," *Observer* (October 5, 1958), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> See *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XI (July 2, 1958), cols. 21-23; and (July 4, 1958), cols. 151-152.

fices,"<sup>23</sup> there can be little wonder that in its desperate attempt to seize the reins of power the Opposition turns to the kinds of methods indicated by the Granville Sharp Report. Harassment has led to unconstitutional methods, electoral boycotts, and walkouts from the legislature. These provocative actions have in turn led to further harassment. The result has been to undermine the effectiveness of the Opposition as a restraint on arbitrary or hasty majority-backed legislation.<sup>24</sup> And the removal of this key restraint leads in turn to a general weakening of the whole edifice of safeguards set up in the original constitutional document in 1957.

While evidences of tightened Governmental control are clear in such areas as recruitment of civil servants and labor relations,<sup>25</sup> the process is perhaps most striking in the case of the judiciary. An independent judiciary, after all, is one of the major constitutional safeguards set up to restrain executive arbitrariness, and any provision which seems to tamper with its composition or operations may be rightfully regarded with suspicion.

Ever since the Government has made use of its extraordinary powers to deport aliens and detain citizens of Ghana for reasons of state, the Opposition has had recourse to the courts in an effort to prevent harsh and unjust actions. Their appeals have not gone without some success. In one celebrated case in 1958, Mr. Justice Smith ruled that the former Minister of the Interior, Krobo Edusei, and the Commissioner of Police, E. R. T. Madjitey, were in contempt of court for having deported men claiming Ghanaian nationality while

<sup>23</sup> See Henry L. Bretton, "Current Political Thought and Practice in Ghana," *American Political Science Review*, LII (March, 1958), p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> See J. G. Amamoo, *The New Ghana: The Birth of a Nation* (London: Pan Books, 1958), pp. 134-135.

<sup>25</sup> See Lawrence C. McQuade, "The Showplace of Black Africa," *Yale Review*, XLIX (December, 1959), p. 221; P. J. Monkhouse, "Ghana's Confident Growth," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, April 30, 1959, p. 7; and the debate on the Industrial Relations Bill in *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XII (December 17, 1958), cols. 546-587.

*habeas corpus* proceedings were yet to be determined.<sup>26</sup> The Government swiftly headed off any possible punishment of the two men. In the National Assembly, Kofi Baako, the Minister of Information, introduced an Indemnity Bill exempting Edusei and Madjitey from all penalties. ". . . Parliament," declared Mr. Baako, "which is the supreme authority in this country will today determine whether the Minister of the Interior and the Commissioner of Police acted rightly."<sup>27</sup> This ringing challenge to the authority of the courts brought rejoinders from the Acting Chief Justice, Mr. W. B. Van Lare, the Ghana Bar Association,<sup>28</sup> and others; nevertheless, it succeeded in preventing the judicial process from following its normal course. This Indemnity Act was also a harbinger of new efforts to reduce judicial autonomy.

Very shortly after Parliament passed the Indemnity Act, the Government brought before it a bill amending the provisions of the Constitution pertaining to the appointment of judicial officers. As originally provided by the Constitution, "The appointment, promotion, transfer, termination of appointment, dismissal and disciplinary control of judicial officers is . . . vested in the Governor-General, acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission."<sup>29</sup> This provision insulated the judiciary by removing matters of appointment, advancement, and discipline from partisan influences. It therefore acted as a major constitutional safeguard. The Government, however, felt it necessary to introduce a bill (subsequently enacted) which put an end to the Judicial Service Commission. It also gave the Prime Minister power to advise the Governor-General on the appointment of appeal judges and puisne judges (although the Prime Minister must

<sup>26</sup> *Daily Graphic* (Accra), December 23, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XIII (December 24, 1958), col. 3.

<sup>28</sup> See the *Daily Graphic* (Accra), December 30, 1958, p. 1; and January 7, 1959, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> *The Ghana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1957*, Art. 56 (1).

consult with the Chief Justice on the latter appointments). In substance, such an amendment can only be understood as a victory for those forces seeking to concentrate authority and to break down constitutional restraints on executive action. Such an objective may not be destructive of democracy in a majoritarian sense, but it does not fit well with democracy as a concept of limited government.

#### IV

An important example of the process toward "centralized democracy,"<sup>30</sup> as Kofi Baako describes it, is the grim struggle over the role to be played by the Regional Assemblies in Ghana. Because the National Liberation Movement (which was to be incorporated later into the United party) demanded a federal solution for the Gold Coast, the Colonial Secretary, at the request of the Gold Coast Government, felt it necessary in 1955 to appoint a constitutional adviser to consider the problem of devolving powers to the regions. The (Bourne) report which followed suggested the establishment of Regional Assemblies having specified powers relating to local government, agriculture, education, housing, and health but no power to raise money by taxation or otherwise.<sup>31</sup> The Regional Assemblies would be grant-receiving bodies and, therefore, clearly subordinate to the central government.

During the following year, a conference was held at Achimota to which all the major groups of the country were invited. Delegations from the National Liberation Movement, the Asanteman Council, and the Northern Territories Council failed to accept this invitation, however. Their refusal to participate put a damper on the general usefulness of the conference, and the year 1956 ended without any satisfactory agreement between the various parties to this dispute.

Since neither side could find any formula to break the im-

<sup>30</sup> *New York Times*, November 30, 1959, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> *Gold Coast. Report of the Constitutional Adviser* (Accra, 1955), pp. 4-8.

pending deadlock over this issue, it was put off until a later date<sup>32</sup> in order not to impede the grant of self-government early in 1957. Hence the Constitution provided for a Regional Constitutional Commission which was to enquire into and report on the devolution to the Regional Assemblies of authority, functions, and powers in order to fulfill ". . . the need for a body at regional level with effective powers in specified fields. . . ."<sup>33</sup>

In accordance with this provision, the Governor-General appointed the Van Lare Commission in June, 1957. The commission interviewed people representing all shades of opinion in Ghana and, in April, 1958, submitted its combined report and draft Regional Assemblies Bill of over two-hundred pages.

Throughout the report there ran a conviction that if Regional Assemblies were established with sufficient authority and functions, ". . . they [would] be able to make a constructive contribution to the development of Ghana."<sup>34</sup> In view of this belief, the commission set out detailed proposals for the establishment of regional authorities. Five Regional Assemblies (Northern, Ashanti, Eastern, Western, and Trans-Volta/Togoland) were to be elected by universal adult suffrage from single-member regional electoral districts. Members of Parliament, but not all chiefs, would be disqualified from seeking election to the Regional Assemblies. The commission was careful not to recommend the devolution of any original legislative powers or any taxing powers upon the regions. What it did assign them were general supervisory powers over local authorities and the power to render services or advice in such fields as agriculture, education, health,

<sup>32</sup> Dr. Kwame Nkrumah later remarked caustically that during the negotiations for independence the Opposition ". . . committed a rape on mother Ghana by forcing these Regional Assemblies upon the country." See *Parliamentary Debates (Ghana)*, XII (November 3, 1958), col. 16.

<sup>33</sup> *The Ghana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1957*, Art. 64 (1).

<sup>34</sup> *Ghana. Report to His Excellency the Governor-General by the Regional Constitutional Commission* (Accra, 1958), p. 3.

roads, housing, and electricity. The commission also proposed that the Regional Assemblies should be entitled to review and make suggestions on draft bills which particularly affect their region prior to the date these bills were introduced in the National Assembly. The commission estimated that the capital expenditure (buildings, transport, office equipment) necessary to implement its recommendations would be in the neighborhood of £830,000, while the recurrent administrative expenses (salaries, transportation, administration) would occasion an annual outlay of approximately £280,000 in all.<sup>35</sup> The mere mention of such vast sums was grist for the Government's mill; for, as the budget speech of that year graphically illustrated, there was very little surplus money in Ghana and what there was would certainly have to be channeled into the most essential projects.

In reply to the report of the Regional Constitutional Commission, the Government published a terse, one-page White Paper setting down its attitude on the question. The Government's statement took direct issue with the core of the commission's proposed scheme to establish regional authorities with responsibility for a wide range of functions. It preferred to leave these duties in the hands of local authorities who would remain under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Government. "It would be wasteful, cumbersome and altogether unsound administratively," reasoned the Government, "to have in the proposed local government structure another tier, in the form of Regional Assemblies, where would be exercised powers and functions which have normally been exercised by local authorities. This would mean taking a retrograde step and departing from the principle which the Government has always observed of permitting Local Authorities to develop more and more into responsible bodies with extensive functions."<sup>36</sup> As a concession to Article 64 of the

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119-123.

<sup>36</sup> *Ghana. Statement of the Ghana Government on the Report of the Regional Constitutional Commission* (Accra, 1958).

Constitution (which provided for the establishment of Regional Assemblies "with effective powers in specified fields"), the Government proposed to create Regional Assemblies but to limit them to advising only. Explaining this interpretation of the Constitution to Parliament, Kofi Baako declared that advice is a "specified field" in which Parliament may give powers to the Regional Assemblies.<sup>37</sup> This explanation did not sit well with Opposition leaders, some of whom indicated a determination to employ every legal means at their disposal in fighting for a greater devolution of power from the center to the regions. They did not consider the right to advise to be tantamount to "effective powers." Instead they felt the functions mentioned in Article 64(2) (namely local government, agriculture, education, public works, police, health, housing, etc.) to be the proper area of authority for the Regional Assemblies.

Because the Opposition recognized that the Government would have little trouble gaining Parliament's approval for its version of the bill, they argued at length that Parliament has no right to alter the recommendations of the commission by itself, since the Regional Constitutional Commission is provided for in the Constitution. At a press conference held by J. A. Braimah, the acting national chairman of the United party at that time, the Opposition condemned the Government's attitude toward the Van Lare Commission report as ". . . an open and direct assault on the Constitution itself." The Government's unwillingness to effect the commission's recommendations was deemed a breach of faith with the Constitution, which all parties had agreed to work under on independence day.<sup>38</sup> In making his reply to this charge, Kofi Baako observed that the Minister of Local Government presented the bill to Parliament intact, thereby completing the Government's obligations under the Constitution. From this

<sup>37</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XI (July 4, 1958), col. 168.

<sup>38</sup> *Daily Graphic* (Accra), June 28, 1958, p. 16. See also *Ashanti Pioneer* (Kumasi), June 28, 1958, p. 1.

point forward Parliament would be the final arbiter with respect to what powers are to be devolved on the Regional Assemblies. "If the architects of the Constitution had wanted the Constitutional Commission to have the final say as to what should be the function and powers of the Regional Assemblies," he asserted, "there would have been no clause in the Constitution authorizing Parliament to debate the bill of the commission with the view of deciding what powers and functions the Regional Assemblies should have."<sup>39</sup>

The Regional Assemblies Bill<sup>40</sup> which the Government introduced into Parliament was patterned after the recommendations of the Constitutional Commission. The Government announced at the same time, however, that it would propose amendments to the bill. These amendments became, in time, the cause of bitter Opposition criticism,<sup>41</sup> for they gave the Regional Assemblies power only to advise the Ministers responsible for such local matters as agriculture, education, roads, health, etc. These changes, the Opposition charged, infringed upon the basic assumptions of the bill. Parliament, they alleged, was not entitled to alter this bill and, in so doing, it was negating the guarantees of the Constitution. When the Speaker ruled that the amendments were admissible and did not "infringe the principle of the Bill,"<sup>42</sup> the Opposition rose as a body and walked out of the National Assembly.

From that point on, the Regional Assemblies were doomed to an ignominious fate. The National Assembly accepted the Government's amendments, an action subsequently held legal by Justice A. H. Simpson in the Accra Divisional Court. Meanwhile, the Opposition boycotted the elections to the Regional Assemblies and the C.P.P. gained overwhelming

<sup>39</sup> *Daily Graphic* (Accra), June 30, 1958, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> See the *Supplement to the Ghana Gazette*, June 28, 1958.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the debate on the second reading of the bill in *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XI (August 11, 1958), cols. 1330-1431.

<sup>42</sup> *Parliamentary Debates* (Ghana), XI (August 14, 1958), col. 1510.

support at the polls. The Government, seizing the opportunity to be done with the Regional Assemblies once and for all, soon moved to amend the Constitution in order to abolish these bodies. The Constitution originally provided that two-thirds of the Regional Assemblies (in addition to two-thirds of the National Assembly) would have to agree to any change which abolished, suspended, or diminished the powers of the Assemblies.<sup>43</sup> This clause, however, was no longer a serious obstacle in light of the C.P.P.'s firm control of all the constitutional organs involved. Thus, in due course, the Regional Assemblies were dissolved by passage of a constitutional amendment, and a major step was taken toward the dismantling of the safeguards which seemed to assure limited government to Ghana.

The modification of another major safeguard—the amending process itself—seems a logical outgrowth of the struggle described above. A rather rigid amending clause was included in the 1957 Constitution to prevent rash decisions by the legislators. For a constitutional amendment to be valid, it would have to be approved by two-thirds of all members of the National Assembly as well as by two-thirds of the total number of Regional Assemblies which were to consider the views put forward by the Houses of Chiefs in their regions.<sup>44</sup> The Government found such a restraint to be "unnecessary"<sup>45</sup> and, taking advantage of its overwhelming support both in Parliament and the Regional Assemblies, proposed that this clause be amended.

Under the terms of the 1958 revision as passed by Parliament, a simple majority would henceforth suffice to alter the basic law of Ghana. Members of the parliamentary Opposition maintained that the removal of this safeguard altered the basis on which Great Britain granted independence,

<sup>43</sup> *The Ghana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1957*, Art. 32 (2).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 32 (1) and (2).

<sup>45</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Ghana)*, XII (November 3, 1958), col. 6; speech by Prime Minister Nkrumah.

making it easy for the Government to make changes of a fundamental nature. Government supporters contended, however, that Parliament is supreme and no legitimate limitation can be placed upon its sovereignty. "Parliament is always sovereign," commented Cobina Kessie, an Independent, "and if we have modelled our system on the British pattern, we have to remember that the Constitution is flexible and can be changed by the will of Parliament for the good government of the country."<sup>46</sup>

## V

The application of the Westminster pattern of parliamentary democracy, not in its pure form but modified by the addition of "paper safeguards," has been somewhat of a mixed blessing to Ghana. Without a doubt, it has helped to ensure strong and stable government. The importance of this is not to be underestimated in the particular circumstances of emergent West Africa. Energetic and personalized leadership is necessary in order to grapple with such problems as tribalism, population pressure, poverty, and even domestic violence.

However, the transfer of the Westminster model to Ghana has not been as smooth as its founders might have hoped. No one could have reasonably expected the Nkrumah Government to work the Constitution without making some alterations in its original form, but, neither could one have expected the fundamental changes—the termination of the functions of the Judicial Service Commission, the abolition of Regional Assemblies, the revision of the amendment procedures—which have been implemented. Political scientists, perhaps, have never fully recognized that the blending of written, constitutional safeguards with the majoritarian aspects of the British pattern is an uneasy combination. Clearly there is an inner dynamism to the British system which makes the shackling of a duly elected government a difficult exercise indeed.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* (November 4, 1958), cols. 72-73.

Sir Ivor Jennings writes that the transfer of British concepts of parliamentarianism ". . . in conditions different from those of the United Kingdom may result in the tyranny of the majority."<sup>47</sup> What he might have added is that the transfer of such concepts by the media of the colonial system to a people not steeped in the British tradition of constitutional self-limitations actually abets the tyranny of the majority—or, more accurately, one-party domination in the name of the people. "British roles and behavior restraints" have not and could not be expected to "become publically acceptable and supported"<sup>48</sup> in so short a training period with actual self-governing institutions. Moreover, it is open to question whether colonial rule, which lodges the power of the state in the hands of alien authorities, is the best training ground for the inculcation of such habits.

<sup>47</sup> Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 122.

<sup>48</sup> Apter, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

## REVOLUTION IN AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

*Roger W. Wescott*

IF, IN ADDITION TO POLITICALLY and technologically underdeveloped areas of the earth, we may recognize intellectually and methodologically underdeveloped areas of scholarship, then the study of African languages has, for almost a century and a half, been such an area. But now the field of African linguistics is, as are many of the underdeveloped regions of the African continent, undergoing a development so rapid and so radical as to amount to a revolution.

Like most revolutions, the Revolution in African Linguistics has opponents as well as supporters. There is no dearth of Africanists who feel that the linguistic revolutionaries are trying to go too far too fast, that they have destroyed more than they have created, and that they have unjustly stigmatized as "obfuscators" many patient and devoted African linguists—now referred to as Traditionalists—whose only offence is a pardonable preference for mending their own scholarly fences rather than finding fault with those built by their predecessors.

But who, precisely, are these "Revolutionaries" and "Traditionalists"? As a former Traditionalist who was turned into a Revolutionary by the difficulties of linguistic field-work in Nigeria, I think I am in a reasonably good position to speak, if not impartially, at least from first-hand experience in regard to this question.

### I

Explicit and systematic discussion of the general field of African languages began in the mid-19th century, about 50

years after comparable work on European languages had begun. A milestone in African linguistics was the proposal in 1862, by the South African scholar W. H. Bleek, of the term "Bantu" to denote the languages of all the Negro (but not the Bushman) peoples of southern Africa. Since then, Bantu studies have been, on the whole, ably and rapidly advanced by Carl Meinhof, Sir Harry Johnston, Alice Werner, A. N. Tucker, Malcolm Guthrie, and others.

Non-Bantu languages, however, resisted most efforts at description and classification by standards remotely matching in rigor those of the Indo-Europeanists. Work done, even as late as World War II, on the languages of the eastern and western Sudan by Carl Meinhof, Marcel Delafosse, and Diedrich Westermann was marred by grave methodological flaws. Meinhof (1909 ff.) consistently identified language with race, although strict separation of the two had been a prime requisite of ethnology since the 19th century. Delafosse (1924) substituted typological for genealogical criteria even when establishing avowedly genealogical groups. And Westermann (1911 ff.), though generally more perceptive and more hospitable to fresh insights than most of his fellow "Sudanists," often made such serious errors of factual detail that the broad generalizations he based on them inevitably came to seem dubious at best. (I can personally vouch for the fact that several of the Bini forms Westermann cites in the section on vowel-assimilation in his *Practical Phonetics for Students of African Languages*, 1933, simply do not exist.)

The *Handbook of African Languages*, published in installments since the Second World War by the International African Institute in London under the editorship of Westermann, has tended to become the "official organ" of the Traditionalistic approach to African linguistics. The Traditionalist view, broadly speaking, is that where linguistic data are scarce, language groupings can be based on non-linguistic criteria (like race and culture) and that, again when neces-

sary, genealogical classifications can be based on non-genealogical criteria (like grammatical structure and geographical location). Since Westermann's death, his outlook and method have been perpetuated by Miss Margaret Bryan, who openly and vigorously defends the concept which, more than any other, has precipitated the schism between Traditional and Revolutionary African linguists so characteristic of the last decade: that of the *Mischsprache* ("cross-speech" or hybrid language). A *Mischsprache* is held to be produced by the superimposition, usually by immigrants or invaders, of a linguistic superstratum on an older linguistic substratum, this superstratum consisting not only of "linguistic baggage" (cultural vocabulary, known to be easily lost and acquired), but also of "linguistic body" (basic lexicon, which is relatively resistant to change or replacement).

## II

The Revolutionaries assert flatly that *Mischsprachen* do not exist. Their ground for this denial is their belief—based on the "genetic" theory of evolution shared by linguistics with biology—that languages resemble organisms in the irreversibility of their development and the consequent impossibility of two languages ever converging except in regard to such relatively superficial characteristics as syntactic devices or loan-words. The Revolutionaries hold, in other words, that two dialects which have once become mutually unintelligible—*i.e.*, turned into separate languages—can never regain their mutual intelligibility and so become a single language again. In cases where this appears to have occurred, what has actually happened, they say, is that one of the languages has become extinct and the other has replaced it after acquiring certain of the non-essential (in biological parlance, the "functional-ecological") traits of the obsolescent language.

The Traditionalists, on the other hand, can reply that language is a cultural, not a biological, behavior-pattern and

that it would be strange if the syncretism or cultural convergence we see daily in matters of ideology and custom did not extend equally—in fact, *a fortiori*—to matters of language.

To this the Revolutionaries retort that the task of science is to distinguish not the “strange” from the “un-strange,” but rather the occurrent from the non-ocurrent. Since branching of languages is definitely known to occur, while merging of languages is not definitely known to occur, they assert that no phenomena can legitimately be ascribed to merger which are susceptible to an alternative explanation. And, since all linguistic phenomena are, so far as is known, susceptible to other explanations, language merger must be discarded as an explanation of any phenomenon: the epistemological Law of Logical Parsimony requires it. So runs the Revolutionary argument.

The Traditionalist rebuttal consists (at least potentially) in a slightly more sophisticated version of Charles Kingsley’s celebrated query: “How can you be sure that no water-babies exist until you’ve seen some water-babies not-existing?” The Traditionalists can maintain that language-crossing is like extra-sensory perception: its very rarity makes it all the more worth looking for and describing when it is detected, however tentatively. (Since, however, this aspect of the discussion could so easily turn into the philological equivalent of a debate on the reality of the supernatural, I herewith abandon it, at least *pro tem.*)

Although we have dealt with their antagonists at some length, we have not yet identified the protagonists of the Revolution. The earliest of the African Linguistic Reformers was (so far as I can ascertain) the Rev. William Welmers, whose *Descriptive Grammar of Fante* (1946) was apparently the first such book explicitly and systematically to apply structural methods and principles to the analysis of an African language. What Welmers did, in contradistinction to Ida

Ward and others, was to substitute a rigorously phonemic for a "broadly" phonetic transcription of the Fante (alias Ashanti-Twi or "Ghanaian") sound system—a reform which resulted, among other things, in a reduction of the number of Fante vowels from an arbitrarily allophonic set of nine to a minimally contrastive set of five and, conversely, in an expansion of the number of Fante junctures (inter-morphemic breaks or short silences between words and phrases) from an implicit two or three to an explicit four. Only a year after the publication of Welmer's grammar, Dr. Carleton Hodge of the United States State Department's School of Languages and Linguistics produced a structural grammar of Hausa which not only continued the movement from phonetics to phonemics but also helped lead, by way of the author's discovery of more-than-chance resemblances between the core-vocabulary of ancient Egyptian and that of modern Hausa, to a still more dramatic break-through in the field of linguistic taxonomy the following year.

In 1948, Professor Joseph Greenberg of Columbia University began publishing a series of journal articles on comparative African linguistics which culminated, in 1955, in the appearance of his book, *Studies in African Linguistic Classification*.<sup>1</sup> In these works, Greenberg dropped a real scholarly bombshell, detonation of which blew away many of the most firmly entrenched doctrines in the field of African linguistics. In effect, Greenberg followed the Cartesian principle of maximal elimination of presuppositions, assuming only the basic validity of the genetic principle in diachronic (historical) linguistics and seeing where his methodological house-cleaning would lead him.

As it happens, it led him to what seemed to the Traditionalists to be very bizarre conclusions indeed. Bantu, for example, which had for a century been regarded not only as a true linguistic "family" (*i.e.*, an independent major lan-

<sup>1</sup> (New Haven: Compass Publishing Company, 1955).

guage-group) but, more than that, as the most solidly established of all the language families of Africa, was suddenly demoted from its lofty status. And its demotion was not simple but compound: that is, it now became not merely a sub-group but a sub-sub-group—which is to say, a sub-group of a sub-group. Putting the matter into familiar political and territorial terms, Bantu not only ceased to be a linguistic “nation”: in the Greenbergian dispensation, it even failed to achieve “state” rank and was broken to the level of a linguistic “county.” Needless to say, this affront to the dignity of Bantu studies—which for many linguists had long constituted the hard core of all African studies—did not go unresented.

Yet the deflation of Bantu was only the beginning of Greenberg's taxonomic shake-up of African languages. He took Fulani<sup>2</sup> out of the Hamito-Semitic family (where it had been placed because of the comparatively light complexions of its speakers!) and put it into the Niger-Congo family, where most of its lexical cognates were to be found. He abolished (permanently, one hopes) the blatantly racial category of “Negro-African” languages introduced by Steinthal (1867) and perpetuated, at least terminologically, by Homberger (1913). He dispensed with such taxonomically mongrel groups as “Nilo-Hamitic” (Masai and other East African languages) by revealing their genetic affiliation—that is, their pre-historic identity—with the outright Nilotic languages (such as Shilluk, Nuer, and Dinka). He gave the ludicrous term “Semi-Bantu” the swift and unceremonious burial which its onomastic aroma merited, having effectively demonstrated that there was about as much justification for calling, say, Efik “Semi-Bantu” as for calling German “Semi-English” or Italian “Semi-French.”

In fact, all too large a proportion of the traditional ter-

<sup>2</sup> Alias Ful, Fula, and Peul, not to mention rarer by-forms. (The paronymy here is unfortunately typical of the present state of African ethnic and linguistic nomenclature.)

nology of African linguistics reads like a *Natural History of Nonsense*. When, for example, Westermann labels the non-Ewe tongues of the Togoland interior "Remnant" languages, it is hard to resist asking what they are a remnant of or who left them, and whether he did so absent-mindedly or with the deliberate intention of foisting a nest of linguistic booby-traps on long-suffering 20th-century Africanists. It seems to me no coincidence that the humorist Robert Benchley, in his rollicking essay *The Romance of Language*, should have held up to special ridicule such classificatory coinages as "Semi-Hununity" (in which the psycholinguistic detective can, if he wants, readily discover a scarcely veiled reference to the "semi-humorous unity" of Hottentot, Fulani, and Masai with "Hamitic"). Actually, very little burlesque was required of the satirist here, in view of the fact that traditional African linguistic phraseology so often reads like a deliberate self-caricature anyhow. And recent efforts by Traditionalists to free themselves of the opprobrium of these taxonomic tags by partial replacement of "Semi-Bantu" by "Sub-Bantu" and the like only invite caustic comment to the effect that the Traditionalists have finally sunk from the level of the semi-scientific to that of the sub-scientific.

If the disease from which pre-war African linguistics suffered could be epitomized in a word, I would propose for it the term "Hamitosis." Hamitosis I would define as, despite its oral overtones, essentially a visual affliction, consisting chiefly of a tendency to see floating White spots against a Dark Continent. Unlike the forthright racism of the Gobineau-Chamberlain variety, Hamitosis is crypto-racist. Yet its underlying White Supremacism is abundantly manifest in eulogies of the Caucasoid Hamites as "virile" (Fitzgerald), "masterful" (Meinhof), and "quick-witted" (Seligman), and their languages as "rich . . . sonorous . . . and delicate" (Taylor), as well as in obverse stigmatizations of the Negroid Sudanese as "slow-witted" and their languages as "simple."

## III

In the light of such constant discriminatory insinuations, the harmlessly diverting comedy of errors which traditional African linguistics might otherwise seem begins to assume a less comic appearance. And the asperity of Greenberg's comments seems consequently more forgivable. "Under ordinary circumstances," he writes, "one does not write treatises to prove that French is related to Italian";<sup>3</sup> he goes on to observe, however, that the circumstances of African linguistics have almost never been "ordinary." The man who did more than any other to make African linguistics extraordinary was the scholar of whom Greenberg writes that: ". . . using Meinhof's methods, one could prove that Algonkian was Hamitic"<sup>4</sup> or that ". . . Cape Bushman . . . is related to English."<sup>5</sup> Greenberg concludes: "I have little doubt that . . . if a Negroid population had been found in Central Africa speaking an Indo-European language, Meinhof would, without further ado, have classified it as Hamitic."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, as George Murdock (another of the Revolutionaries) notes, Traditionalistic African philologists and ethnologists have confused language not only with race but also with economic, occupational, and technological traits; in fact, he observes, many ". . . have seemed to regard the herding and milking of cattle as a linguistic trait and an overriding one at that."<sup>7</sup>

In view of the magnitude of Greenberg's achievement in effectively debunking racially and behaviorally based linguistics, one almost feels inclined to quip, in the spirit of Hooton and Howells and with apologies to Pope, that

Afric and Afric's tongues lay hid in night.  
God said, Let Greenberg be! and all was light.

(More to the point, perhaps, I have heard that partisans of

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> *Africa* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 13.

the American linguist, in his contest with Meinhof's German adherents, refuse, at lunchcounters across the nation, to order Hamburgers; they demand Greenbergers instead.)

Nonetheless, one may well ask why it should have been Greenberg, whose classificatory publications began in 1948, rather than Welmers, whose structural contributions began before the War ended, who should be thus honored by having his name equated with Newton's. The reason, I think, is that while Welmer's work exhibited more sharpness and depth and probably did have a more profoundly revolutionary effect on students of the individual languages he described, Greenberg's work had far more breadth and scope and therefore affected larger numbers of people more quickly.

For that matter, if it comes to a catalog of the ranks of the Revolutionaries, even the four men mentioned above hardly suffice to fill the roster. The fact is that in the last decade, even non-Africanists (or, more accurately, scholars only a part of whose work has been specifically related to Africa) have made major contributions to the cause. The Americanist Morris Swadesh, by inventing Glotto-chronology (1950), a lexical technique for estimating time-depth, has immeasurably enriched comparative linguistics everywhere, but especially in areas like sub-Saharan Africa where paleographic and historical data alone are insufficient for the reconstruction of linguistic phylogenies. So far as I know, only one Africanist has extensively and systematically employed Swadesh's word list, and that is David Olmsted, who investigated Bantu languages and Yoruba dialects with admittedly surprising results. (In fact, his 1957 findings that the Cuban Yoruba dialect of Lucumi shows a far higher rate of loss of "core vocabulary" than most genetic theory "permits" it to, might even be construed as an ill-disguised act of Aid and Comfort to the Enemy, were it not for the fact that his ultimate purpose is presumably to refine rather than to discredit Glotto-chronological theory.) However, the Rev. H. A. Glea-

son has recently pointed the way (1959) to obtaining faster and surer, if chronologically less absolute, information on linguistic affinities by substituting for Glotto-chronology, within the general lexico-statistic framework, two new techniques which he calls "the method of counterindications" and "the characteristic vocabulary index." Since these techniques are—in fact, were specifically designed to be—amenable to machine calculation, it may be that African linguistics here stands on the threshold of yet another major breakthrough.

Rather a new tack was taken by Dr. Hans Wolff in his *Sub-system Typologies and Area Linguistics* (1959), in which he applied a technique initially devised for American Indian languages by Professor Carl Voegelin (1956) to the description of 40-odd Nigerian languages. Wolff's interest in typology might at first blush be taken for a reversion to the pseudo-geneticism of Meinhof, were it not for the fact that he takes pains throughout to distinguish genealogical from structural relationships: the phonemically homotypic family which he calls "Plateau" includes, e.g., both Angas and Birom, the former being (in Greenberg's terms) an Afro-Asiatic, the latter a genetically unrelated Niger-Congo language. Wolff's work, I should say, represents, rather than a capitulation to the Forces of Reaction, a welcome corrective to the early—and perhaps understandable—tendency of Greenberg's more zealous supporters to reject out of hand all typological classifications, the methodologically meticulous as well as the indefensibly impressionistic.

Greenberg himself, for that matter, is not wholly innocent of zealotism with its resultant tendency, if not to disparage, at least to underestimate the scholarly contributions of his predecessors. Professor Desmond Cole, for example, observes that, on some sort of Guilt By Association basis, Greenberg makes Johnston share the responsibility for the groundless (!) Great Lakes theory of Bantu origin when, in fact, as early as

1919, Johnston (with an insight approaching clairvoyance) specifically designated the Benue Basin of northeastern Nigeria as the "Bantu birthplace"—and thereby "scooped" Greenberg by a good 30 years!

Furthermore, as Murdock implicitly acknowledges by his own recent nomenclatural revisionism (1959), Greenberg's original terminological innovations (1948-1954) often tended to alienate Africanists who might otherwise have accepted his purely theoretical reforms. Greenberg's language-names are frequently awkward, to say the least. One thinks especially of his "double-barreled" sobriquets, such as Great Lakes (where "Lacustrine" would be briefer and grammatically clearer). Sometimes his two-part tags are actually misleading, as in the case of West Atlantic, which might well be taken by the uninitiated to imply a contrast with some "East Atlantic" group (which does not exist) or to exclude Fulani (which is spoken chiefly in northern Nigeria). Greenberg's substitution of the typological name "Click" for the ethnic term Bushman-Hottentot and, *a fortiori*, for the genealogical term Khoisan, seems a case of ideological back-sliding. Moreover, it, too, could lead to misunderstandings, since typologically Zulu is also a click language (*i.e.*, a language employing velar ejectives similar to the "clucks" of some English expletives and animal-calls), although genetically it is quite as Bantu as is Swahili. A similar atavism is Greenberg's reintroduction of the contempt-name Munshi for the Tiv of Nigeria. In principle, this is hardly less objectionable than it would be to abridge the name of the Niger-Congo group by dubbing it "the Nigger Family."

Indeed, in a few cases Greenberg's names are implicitly or even explicitly contrary to fact. His "Central" branch of Niger-Congo, for example, is simply not "central" on either a horizontal scale (where it turns out to be the easternmost of the Niger-Congo branches) or on a vertical scale (where it is the southernmost). And his defense of the neologism

Afro-Asiatic for the Hamito-Semitic family on the grounds that it is "the only one found in both Africa and Asia" is likewise erroneous: Malayo-Polynesian, too, is found in both Africa (Madagascar) and Asia (Malaya).

Murdock's revision of Greenberg's terminology seems to be largely, if perhaps indeliberately, based on the *Proposals for Linguistic Taxonomy* made by the Americanist Sydney Lamb in 1959. Lamb suggests systematic and significant—*i.e.*, hierarchical—rather than sporadic and capricious use of such descriptive suffixes as *oid*, *an*, and *ic* (as in Penutiod, Tibetan, and Germanic). In effect, Murdock follows Lamb here when he substitutes "Bantoid" for Greenberg's "Central," "Furian" for Greenberg's "Fur," and "Chadic" for his "Chad." But sometimes Murdock's innovations, like Greenberg's, seem to constitute regressions rather than advances. Such an infelicity is Murdock's "Nigritic," offered as a replacement for Greenberg's Niger-Congo. Aside from its possible connotative evocation of the slur-word "nigger," Nigritic is too close to the adjective "Negritic," meaning "pertaining to Pygmy Negroids of Asia," not to lead to confusion on the part of the unwary.

I believe, however, that Murdock is right in principle when he calls for a determined effort on the part of Africanists to avoid using non-linguistic terms to designate linguistic groups. He himself proposes replacement of Greenberg's "Central Saharan" by "Kanuric" on the grounds that ethnic names are closer to linguistic names than are territorial names.<sup>8</sup> I concur, but would go further and maintain that the least objectionable terms are those like "Hamitic" which are genealogical in their reference. Next best, in my estimation—since they are still primarily linguistic, if not actually genealogical, in reference—are typological terms like "Click." Tribal names like "Songhai" are still acceptable on the whole, if

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

not as clear as purely linguistic names. With geographical names like "Niger-Congo," however, we begin to run the danger of confusing locale with kinship. This danger becomes more imminent when, as with names like "Sudanic," the term has (because of the recent national emergence of the Sudan) a political as well as an areal reference. Unquestionably worst of all are racial names like "Negro-African," which imply that speech is determined by physiognomy and make it *a priori* difficult to accept what is now, in fact, a virtual certainty—*viz.*, that the Fulani, despite their relatively Caucasoid features, speak a "Black" language, yet have nonetheless conquered and ruled speakers of a "White" language: Hausa.

The only type of non-linguistic terminology which has not yet (so far as I know) actually been used to designate a linguistic group is the occupational. Yet considering, as Murdock notes, the amazing persistence with which technological and economic criteria have been invoked in racial and linguistic classifications, it would hardly surprise a Revolutionary to find one of the more rock-ribbed Traditionalists speak, for example, of "Cattle Languages"—meaning, presumably, not languages in which "Moo!" replaces "Hi!" but languages spoken by pastoral peoples. (Such a terminology, reflecting a sort of filial piety run wild, would be the ultimate manifestation of pre-Revolutionary Confusionism.)

#### IV

Straw men aside, however, one of the major nomenclatural problems facing the Revolutionaries is what to do with ethnological names that have been consistently misused by Africanists. Such a name is the term "Hamite," which has been used racially to mean "Caucasoid," occupationally to mean "pastoral," and linguistically to designate a cluster of language groups traditionally regarded as correlative with Semitic (with which it therefore, quite logically, formed a "Hamito-Semitic" family). Even the Traditionalists are now

being compelled, however reluctantly, to abandon the non-linguistic uses of the term Hamite. But the Revolutionaries have gone further and asserted that each of the supposedly Hamitic sub-branches—*viz.*, Berber, Chadic, (Ancient) Egyptian, and Cushitic—is actually correlative with Semitic itself, so that Hamitic has become, at best, a negative category like “non-Indo-European” or “invertebrate,” rather than a truly descriptive category like “Altaic” or “arthropod.”

Even if it is agreed, however, that Hamitic can no longer legitimately be used in any of its older senses, it remains a question just what to do with it. Following the lead of Indo-Europeanists, who, understandably appalled by the enormities of Nazi “Aryanism,” have made “Aryan” a scientific taboo word, Greenberg himself favors discarding “Hamitic” completely and substituting the geographical compound “Afro-Asiatic.” The difficulty with this term, however, is that it is all too likely to lead the uninitiated to conceive of the family as a di-typic group having two off-shoots—an African branch consisting of “Hamitic” and Ethiopic, and an Asian branch consisting of non-Ethiopic Semitic (another negative category!). My own feeling is that misused terms are like anti-social individuals in that it is far more constructive—and profitable—to reform and re-employ them than to eliminate them altogether. Hence, like Murdock, I would prefer to retain “Hamitic” but re-define it as the legitimate familial designation for the entire Hamito-Semitic—alias Afro-Asiatic—group.

In the case of “Niger-Congo,” I agree with Murdock that its territorial reference makes it potentially misleading as the family appellation of such far-flung languages as Wolof, Kordofanian, and Sotho. “Sudano-Guinean,” however, is still more unfortunate—first, because it implies acceptance of Delafosse’s view, now generally rejected, that such languages as Zande and Dinka are genetically related, and second, because it suggests a simple bifurcation contradicting the multi-

ple split found by Greenberg and others. "Nigritic" unhappily evokes racial associations. My personal preference was for the term "Guinean" until emergence of the new nation-state of Guinea unluckily rendered that term ambiguous. With some hesitancy, I now propose the porte-manteau coinage "Nigo" (which is to "Niger-Congo" as "brunch" is to "breakfast-lunch"), on the grounds that the linguistically sophisticated will divine its derivation without drawing unwarranted geographical or bifurcatory inferences from it, while the linguistically unsophisticated will simply accept it at face value rather than deducing from it inadmissible linguistic or non-linguistic corollaries.

One last desperate attempt to discredit the Revolutionary taxonomists has been made by those Traditionalists who point out—quite correctly—that Greenberg keeps reducing the number of his genealogically autonomous African language families: from 16 in 1949 and 12 in 1954 to (in unpublished addresses at professional meetings) a mere 4 in 1959! The facts are undeniable; but the conclusion drawn from them—that Greenberg "clearly doesn't know his own mind"—seems to me a complete *non sequitur*. Greenberg knows his mind well enough to be highly consistent in his objective, which is to apply the rule of Occam's Razor to African linguistics in such a way as to produce a classification which is as clear, as simple, and as elegant as available data will permit. This he has done unfailingly. And his classification has grown steadily simpler as more accurate and more inclusive data have been made accessible to him in a field in which paucity of essential descriptive data has long been one of the most exasperating obstacles to analytical progress. In short, the progressive evolution of Greenberg's taxonomy is a testimony, it seems to me, not to the "unreliability" of his method but, on the contrary, to its flexibility, its vitality, and its capacity to incorporate new information.

## V

A literary friend of mine who read the first draft of this article commented: "The salvos are entertaining, but when you come right down to it, what's all the shooting for?" I confess that, to a non-Africanist, the *Streit um Greenberg* must seem disturbingly like an American presidential campaign: noisy and colorful though it is, the outsider has an understandable difficulty pin-pointing what is presumably the crux of the whole matter—the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans.

In the case of African linguistics, the difference between the methodological factions is, like that between United States political parties, strictly relative, yet nonetheless real. One of the most crucial differences is that about the work of the philological traditionalists there hangs a gnostic aura, an air of cultural mysticism which is rarely detectable in the proceedings of the Revolutionaries. Most of the Traditionalists seem to feel, if only implicitly, that there is ultimately something quite unique about African languages. The few who are explicit on this point will, when pressed, usually point to phenomena like the Bushman clicks and ask where else on earth one can find peoples employing suction stops. The answer, of course, is: practically everywhere. The "uniqueness" of the Khoisan clicks consists simply of the fact that they are, in Khoisan, full-fledged phonemes rather than, as among most peoples, mere paraglosses. (Putting it another way, injective speech-sounds that are micro-linguistic for the Bushmen and their neighbors are, instead, para-linguistic for the speakers of most other languages—African as well as non-African.)

The supposed uniqueness of African languages is widely felt by the Traditionalists to characterize not merely African phonological systems but also the relationships between language, race, and culture in most, if not all, parts of the con-

tinent. Even those who admit that language is not determined by skin-color in other lands feel that in Africa, in some subtle and inexplicable way, it is. "Black laughter" and "in-born Negro rhythm" are considered by many of them to be inextricably bound up with peculiarities of lexical tone and prefix-concord.

Analogously, Traditionalists are inclined to feel that, while mixed languages and grammatical substrata are rare if not wholly lacking in Europe, nonetheless they abound in Africa, where languages intertwine and commingle like creeping plants in a tropical rain-forest. Along with this inclination on the part of the Traditionalists goes a tendency to believe that no linguist, however gifted or well-trained he may be, can penetrate to the essential "inwardness" of an African language until and unless he has spent long years with the tribe speaking it and so qualified as an "old Africa hand," a man with an "intuitive feel" for "the African mind."

From such sentiments to the once-prevalent "*bwana-complex*" it is but a short step, and the Revolutionaries have seldom failed to point this out—not always very diplomatically. For them the entire Traditionalist attitude smacks of reaction, political as well as cultural. They claim that the underlying motive of most Traditionalistic opposition to Structural reformism is a nostalgic desire on the part of Old Africa Hands to keep the Dark Continent dark by making it, among other things, a sort of perpetual preserve for linguistic gremlins—gremlins which have long since been exorcized on other continents.

The crux of the Revolutionary argument, in sum, is that African linguistics ought not to remain what it has so long but so artificially constituted thus far: a discipline unto itself, fathomed only (so it seemed) by a cult-like handful of initiates. Rather, the insurgents hold, African linguistics ought to take its rightful place as one of a number of areal sub-divisions of General Linguistics, unique only in the sense that every

member of a class is unique. Rapid progress in clearing up the obscurities which have hitherto dogged African language study, they assert, can be made quite simply by applying to Africa techniques of linguistic analysis which have proved so effective elsewhere. As the cry of African nationalists is now "industrialize!," so the cry of the Revolutionary linguists has become "structuralize!"; the objective in each case being that of enabling Africa to cease being a land apart and to join the modern world, intellectually as well as technologically.

Up to this point I may have left the reader with the impression that all African linguists are sharply divided into two bitterly warring camps—the Old Guard of Europe, with their headquarters at the African Institute in London, and the Young Turks of America, with their headquarters at Columbia University in New York—balefully glowering at each other across the Atlantic, each praying ceaselessly for the complete and final elimination of the other. Luckily for the cause of science such is not the case. Not only are there many independents who side with neither group, but there are also a growing number of "reunionists," who think that each faction can and should profit greatly from the work of the other, and that the sooner recrimination yields to collaboration, the better. One such advocate of unity is Dr. Robert Armstrong, Field Director of the West African Linguistic Survey, who regards "schools" of linguistics as analogous to dialects of languages and holds that the linguist who is unable or unwilling to read, write, and, even more, speak the theoretical and stylistic "dialect" of other linguists in his field is simply a deficient linguist. Many a weary Africanist, I am sure, will say amen to that.

At a recent meeting of the Michigan Linguistic Society at Michigan State University's new Oakland Branch, Professor James Downter of the University of Michigan expressed his belief that modern linguistics has just passed through the

"Scholastic" period of its development, characterized by acrimonious factional disputes about categories and definitions. He then issued a clarion call to all students of language to participate in the impending "Renaissance" of linguistics, to be characterized by an abundant and freely shared harvest of the intellectual seeds sown in the vanishing darkness of exaggerated particularism. In response, one can only hope that his call may be answered and his prophecy fulfilled, in African linguistics as in all other areas of the human quest for expanded horizons. Nor need this hope, I would maintain, be construed as a betrayal or even an abandonment of linguistic Revolutionism. For the worth of any revolution, in my view, can be assessed not by the number of people it condemns and excludes, but by the number it persuades and embraces.

## AN INCIDENT IN HUMAN EVOLUTION IN AFRICA

*Marvin D. Solomon*

### I

IN THE YEAR 1910 THERE CAME to a Chicago hospital a young West Indian Negro. The attending physician, Dr. James B. Herrick, was not able to identify the illness whose symptoms were fever, cough, dizziness, and headaches. He did, however, observe a peculiarity of the blood: "The shape of the red cells was very irregular and what especially attracted attention was the large number of thin, elongated sickle-shaped and crescent-shaped forms."<sup>1</sup> With this blood cell description, the stage was set for the enactment of a drama that was to draw the attention of biologists, anthropologists, sociologists, geneticists, and medical men from that time to the present. The ramifications of the problem are still being hunted out in Africa and elsewhere.

During the years that passed, reports describing other cases similar to the one described by Dr. Herrick accumulated, and virtually all of these reports dealt with this condition in the American Negro. By 1917, it seemed conclusive that the condition was hereditary and that it occurred almost exclusively in Negroes. Because of the shape of the cells in those with the abnormality, the name "sickle-cell" was given. There appeared to be two forms of this manifestation. Most of the individuals who exhibit this phenomenon apparently suffer no ill effects from the shape of the distorted, distended cells and are therefore referred to as having the sickle-cell trait. But a

<sup>1</sup> George W. Gray, "Sickle Cell Anemia," *Scientific American*, 185, 56-59 (August, 1951).

number of individuals who show this deviation are also victims of a severe and chronic disease known as the sickle-cell disease or sickle-cell anemia. Moreover, a person with sickle-cell anemia shows considerably more of these bizarre shaped cells than an individual with the sickle-cell trait.

The hereditary nature of this abnormality has been recognized since Emmel<sup>2</sup> in 1917 described sickling in the blood of a father and son. The modern interpretations of the inheritance of the disease were advanced both by Neel,<sup>3</sup> working with American Negroes, and by Beet,<sup>4</sup> working with the Bantu tribal people in Africa. These researchers postulated that the two conditions of sickle-cell trait and sickle-cell anemia are inherited on the basis of one pair of genes, and are related as heterozygote and homozygote. That is, there exists a gene which in the heterozygous condition (one gene of the pair of genes will produce the sickling phenomenon; the other gene is non-active for sickling) results in the sickle-cell trait, while in the homozygous condition (both genes of the pair of genes will produce the sickling phenomenon) it results in sickle-cell anemia. The support for this hypothesis rests on two propositions: (1) observation that in the great majority of the cases of sickle-cell disease both parents show the trait; and (2) the fact that in families in which the sickle-cell trait occurs the ratio of the disease to trait to normal approximates 1:2:1, which is the expected ratio for this type of inheritance. Moreover, the children born of the union of individuals suffering from the disease with non-sickling persons have always shown the trait, and this, too, is to be expected. Discrepancies in ratios may be due to interference with observation because of effects produced by other inherited hemoglobin variants.

<sup>2</sup> V. E. Emmel, "A Study of the Erythrocytes in a Case of Severe Anemia with Elongated and Sickle-Shaped Blood Cells," *Arch. Int. Med.*, **20**, 586-598 (1917).

<sup>3</sup> J. V. Neel, "The Inheritance of Sickle Cell Anemia," *Science*, **110**, 64-66 (1949).

<sup>4</sup> E. A. Beet, "The Genetics of the Sickle Cell Trait in a Bantu Tribe," *Ann. Eugenics*, **14**, 279-284 (1949).

Most of the heterozygotes are perfectly healthy persons, except, perhaps, at high altitudes. But homozygotes (those with the two genes for sickling) suffer from a severe anemia which is usually fatal in early childhood. The sickling gene leads to the production of a hemoglobin that is, in a degree, different from a normal hemoglobin molecule. The normal hemoglobin molecule, even under varying oxygen conditions, takes on a complement of oxygen without change. However, under the lowered oxygen situation found in the capillaries, the sickling individual forms long hemoglobin molecules. These long molecules lead in turn to the development of holly-shaped, oak-leaf shaped, and sickle-shaped red blood cells. The abnormal-shaped cells block the small blood vessels, and it is this blockage of the small vessels which results in the various symptoms of the disease.

In time, the hypothesis that the sickling phenomenon was restricted to African populations gained widespread adherence, and it was further postulated that any manifestation of sickling in an individual indicated an African origin. It was also assumed that it might be possible to utilize the presence of the sickling gene in a population to trace population movements into and out of Africa. For instance, does the presence of the sickling gene in Indian Veddoid populations indicate a population movement from India to Africa? Was India a source of population for Africa? Was this population movement the ultimate source of the sickling gene? The crux of the problem began to be perceived when the question was raised as to why there were so few reported cases of sickle-cell anemia in Africa as compared to that of the American Negro population. As could be anticipated, one worker went so far as to suggest that anemia appeared in the United States as a deleterious effect of Negro-Caucasoid miscegenation. But the real heart of the problem was exposed when finally there was sufficient knowledge to ask this question: how can we account for the maintenance of the high sickle-cell gene frequency in various African populations when the persons who

are homozygous for the gene have an extremely low reproductive rate? These, then, are some of the problems and some of the hypotheses that came out of the visit to Dr. Herrick by the young Negro in 1910.

## II

In the years that followed the discovery of sickle-cell anemia, practically all of the cases examined were those of American Negroes, and it was then assumed that the disease was to be found only in Negroes. These early observations led to the conclusion that the possession of the gene in Caucasoid populations indicated admixture with African populations. Indeed, throughout the history of the study of this gene, it has become well established that it is a rare entity in Caucasian groups which have had no contact with African populations. And, as corroboration, it has been noted that the greatest frequency of the reports of the presence of the gene comes from those areas where admixture with Africans is quite likely to have occurred. Chernoff<sup>5</sup> states: ". . . that many observers consider Negro ancestry *sine qua non* for the presence of the sickling phenomenon no matter how remote the admixture or how minimal the Negroid characteristics." Most of the sickling among Caucasoids is found in the Mediterranean area and in North and South America. The possibility is that the gene for sickling was carried into these areas by invasion from Africa, the use of African mercenaries, and trade in general, including the slave trade.

A basic question arises as to how the gene appeared in African populations in the first place. Is it the result of a mutation process, or did it come from another population? Mourant<sup>6</sup> has argued that the finding of sickling in the Veddoid population of southern India has made possible impor-

<sup>5</sup> Amoz I. Chernoff, "The Human Hemoglobins in Health and Disease," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 253, 416-423 (September 8, 1955).

<sup>6</sup> A. E. Mourant, *The Distribution of the Human Blood Groups* (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1954).

tant contributions to knowledge concerning the peopling of Africa on the assumption that there was in the long distant past a Veddoid movement into Africa. But, as Mourant also suggests, it is problematical as to how far one can use a genetic trait in the attempt to interpret possible population movements. The frequency of sickling in East Africa seems to indicate a southern movement down through northeast Africa. It is significant that in the southern regions of Africa there is an absence of the sickling genes among such groups as the Bushman people. An analysis of other hemoglobin gene frequencies shows that the Bushmen have a typical African blood gene distribution. This appears to indicate that, in general, the African is mainly derived from Bushman stock. The presence of the sickling gene may be taken to mean that there is an African-Veddoid admixture. On the basis of this type of evidence, the hypothesis might then be advanced that there was a Veddoid movement into Africa which did not penetrate quite as far as the Bushman people.

Why, in spite of the number of cases of sickle-cell trait reported in Africa, were there so few reports concerning sickle-cell anemia? As indicated previously, the genetics of the homozygous-heterozygous postulations allow for some kinds of predictions to be made. For instance, one can predict that a person with sickle-cell anemia (possessing two sickling genes) has one gene from each parent. Therefore each parent must, at the least, have the sickle-cell trait. As has been noted above, it can be predicted that with the mating of two individuals with the disease all of the children should have the disease. (It has been estimated that the loss of fertility at birth of children with sickle-cell anemia is about 20 per cent of normal expectations.) A further prediction states that a normal person mating with one who has the disease should produce children 100 per cent of whom have the sickle-cell trait. When two individuals with the trait mate, the ratio of those with the disease to those with the trait to those who are

normal is as 1:2:1. But there are discrepancies to these predictions; one explanation of these discrepancies has already been suggested, namely, that of other, deviant, hemoglobins. However, there appears to be, on the basis of extremely few cases of reported anemia, discrepancies from the above predictions that cannot be explained on the basis of other variant hemoglobins. In the American Negro population, about 10 per cent have the sickle-cell trait. From this percentage, it can be calculated that the frequency, at birth, of sickle-cell anemia among American Negroes should be about 2.2 per 1,000 births. In the middle belt of Africa, the native population shows a sickling phenomenon of about 20 per cent which should result in a sickle-cell anemia in about 12.8 per 1,000 births. Yet these statistics did not show up in the available analyses of African populations.

When the question is raised as to why there were so few reported cases of sickle-cell anemia in Africa, a number of alternative reasons were given by various workers in the field. The possibility was expressed that in native Africans there are present genetic modifiers which are not present in American Negroes. British workers proposed the notion that the intermarriage of the Negro, the Caucasian, and the Indian in the United States had upset the genetic immunity to the effect of the sickle-cell gene which the Negro acquired in Africa over long periods of time. Raper,<sup>7</sup> for example, has suggested that the presence of the trait in a community, and its admixture with other races, has resulted in the accentuation of the disease in the American community as compared to the mildness of the disease in the African community. Neel<sup>8</sup> has argued that the anemia is just as severe in Africa but that most of the children with the disease are eliminated

<sup>7</sup> A. B. Raper, "Sickle-Cell Disease in Africa and America—A Comparison," *Journal of Tropical Medicine*, 53, 49-53 (1950).

<sup>8</sup> J. V. Neel, "The Population Genetics of Two Inherited Blood Dyscrasias in Man," *Cold Spring Harbor Symposium on Quantitative Biology*, 15, 141-158 (1951).

when very young. In relation to the possible elimination of the children, Neel<sup>9</sup> states that: "Shortly thereafter reports from Africa, especially the Congo Region, established the fact that when the disease is sought for at the pediatric level, it is to be found with a considerable frequency, a frequency which may in fact match that demanded by the homozygous-heterozygous theory." Neel went on to say that: ". . . if the population of Africa south of the Sahara amounts to approximately 200,000,000 persons, of whom 20 per cent have the sickle cell trait, then neglecting for the moment the effects of differential mortality, approximately 2,400,000 persons should be homozygous for the sickle cell gene in that region alone. These facts point to the possible existence of a medical problem of first order magnitude."

### III

With the establishment of the fact that the gene existed in Africa in the expected homozygous-heterozygous frequencies, a basic problem—the one at the heart of this paper—arose. The problem can be stated simply: how to account for the maintenance of the high frequencies of the gene in the various populations in Africa when the persons who are homozygous for the sickle-cell gene have an extremely low reproduction rate? Each generation sees the loss of a large number of these genes through the death and reproductive failure of those with sickle-cell anemia. How can the heterozygote frequencies of upwards of 20 per cent be maintained in the African tribes despite the elimination of the homozygote genes? Twenty per cent sickling would indicate that the disease is present in about one child out of every hundred. Natural selection, that is, elimination of the individuals with the disease, should have, theoretically, decreased the frequency of the disease down to where it occurs in between one

<sup>9</sup> J. V. Neel, "Implications of Some Recent Developments in Hematological and Serological Genetics," *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 6, 208-223 (June, 1954).

in 10,000 to one in 100,000 persons. The high gene frequencies that actually exist must therefore be explained.

Three basic hypotheses have been advanced as explanations for the high sickle-cell frequencies that are encountered in the middle belt of Africa. These are: (1) continuing mutations within the population; (2) meiotic drive; and, (3) selective advantages to the heterozygote—the heterozygote being reproductively superior to either homozygote (the homozygote which has sickle-cell anemia or the homozygote which has the normal hemoglobin).

Theoretically, the mutation of a normal hemoglobin producing gene to a sickling gene should lead to sickling genes in a population. The question here is whether the rate of mutation in African populations is sufficient to maintain the high frequencies encountered. There is, however, very little evidence to support the mutation hypothesis. Hiernaux<sup>10</sup> in 1952 found that out of 134 infants born from normal x normal marriages, there were ten infants exhibiting the sickle-cell trait. This, on the surface, appears to be a high rate of mutation. However, the studies were inconclusive as there were no serological tests of paternity conducted on the parents in order to determine the possibility of false paternity.

Most of the studies designed to test this hypothesis refute it. Vandepitte, *et. al.*<sup>11</sup> state in a summary of their work on mutation as a possibility that the: ". . . maximal estimates of the rate of mutation of the sickle-cell gene . . . , although very high by the usual standards of human mutation rates, is only approximately one-tenth that necessary to offset natural selection in a population with 25 per cent sickling." Allison<sup>12</sup> reports that: ". . . it has been calculated that to

<sup>10</sup> J. Hiernaux, "La Génétique de la Sicklémie et l'Intérêt Anthropologique de sa Fréquence en Afrique Noire," *Ann. Mus. Congo Belge.*, Vol. 2 (1952).

<sup>11</sup> J. M. Vandepitte, *et. al.*, "Evidence Concerning the Inadequacy of Mutations as an Explanation of the Frequency of the Sickle Cell Gene in the Belgian Congo," *Blood*, 10, 341-350 (1955).

<sup>12</sup> A. C. Allison, "Aspects of Polymorphism in Man," *Symposia on Quantitative Biology*, 30, 238-244 (1955).

replace the loss of genes by mutation alone a mutation rate of  $10^{-1}$  per gene per generation would be necessary. This is of the order of 5,000 times as great as other estimated mutation rates in man. Furthermore, to explain the restricted distribution of the sickle-cell gene such abnormally high rates would have to be confined not only to one or two races of mankind, but to isolated groups within the races. Hence it is reasonable to exclude an increased mutation rate as an explanation of the . . . high heterozygous frequency . . . present." While the mutation of normal hemoglobin genes to sickling genes is probably taking place, it appears to be quite clear at this point that the high frequencies of the sickling gene in middle belt African populations cannot be accounted for on the basis of mutation alone.

Spuhler<sup>13</sup> raises the possibility of meiotic drive functioning to support the high gene frequencies. In the heterozygote, the ratio of gametes formed having the gene for sickling to gametes formed having the gene for normal hemoglobin is as 1:1. Meiotic drive refers to deviations from this normal ratio in favor of the formation of a greater number of sickling gametes, or a greater survival rate of these gametes. While this phenomenon has been observed in some laboratory forms, it cannot, at least at this time, be applied as an explanation of the high sickle gene frequency found in central Africa.

The early reports on sickling indicated that there was not always an equal distribution of the trait in a given area. This was demonstrated when a study was made of the distribution in the territory of Uganda. Lehmann and Raper<sup>14</sup> felt that the variations could be explained on the basis of language and racial differences among the various tribes in the area. Among four tribes using Hamitic languages, the frequency

<sup>13</sup> J. N. Spuhler, in Hauser and Duncan, eds., *Physical Anthropology and Demography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

<sup>14</sup> H. Lehmann and A. B. Raper, "Distribution of the Sickle-Cell Trait in Uganda and Its Ethnological Significance," *Nature*, 167, 950-951 (1949). (London).

was up to almost 4 per cent. Among Nilotics tribes, the incidence varied from 21 to 28 per cent; Bantu varied most, from 21 to 45 per cent; while the tribes with the lowest frequencies had the greatest proportion of Hamitic admixture, and those with little or no Hamitic blood had the highest frequencies. Though these findings are perhaps useful in terms of tribal origins, they do not seem to account for the high heterozygous frequencies. Yet, perhaps, distribution studies do hold the key to this problem in Africa.

#### IV

Now, further studies on the geographical distribution of the sickling gene in Africa indicated that the greatest frequencies were in those areas where subtertian malaria is hyperendemic, *i.e.*, where the possibility of malaria is continuous throughout the year, with persons becoming infected and reinfected continuously. Perhaps malaria was a selective agent. There was a suggestion in the literature as early as 1950 of the possibility of an advantage to the heterozygote because of greater resistance to parasites. Later, in 1952, Brain<sup>15</sup> postulated that those with the trait were more resistant to malaria than those with normal hemoglobin. Allison<sup>16</sup> has done most of the basic work on this hypothesis; his work constitutes the fundamental support of the hypothesis of a selective advantage of the heterozygote over both of the homozygote possibilities. He states that: "Recently, however, evidence has been obtained which indicates that persons with the sickle-cell trait have a considerable degree of natural resistance to subtertian malaria. Hence it may be supposed that, wherever subtertian malaria is hyperendemic, children with the sickle-cell trait will tend to survive, while some children without the trait are eliminated before they acquire a solid immunity to malarial infection. The protection against

<sup>15</sup> P. Brain, "Sickle-Cell Anemia in Africa," *British Medical Journal*, 2, 880 (1952).

<sup>16</sup> A. C. Allison, "Protection Afforded by Sickle-Cell Trait Against subtertian Malarial Infection," *British Medical Journal*, 1, 290-294 (1954).

malaria might also increase the fertility of possessors of the trait. The proportion of individuals with the sickle-cell trait in any population, then, would be the result of a balance between two factors: the severity of malarial infection, which would tend to increase the frequency of the gene, and the rate of elimination of sickle-cell genes in persons dying of sickle-cell anemia."

Allison's hypothesis suggests that those individuals who are heterozygous for the sickle-cell gene have a selective advantage over the individuals with normal hemoglobin and sickle-cell anemia. As has been indicated, the sickle-cell gene frequency is much higher than would be expected by mutation alone. Therefore, if these African populations have developed a different gene frequency than other populations in response to a factor in the environment, then biological evolution has taken place.

Allison tested this hypothesis. He looked for an area which would provide experimental and control situations, for he had to show that in those areas where the causative agent of subtertian malaria, *Plasmodium falciparum*, is hyperendemic, there should be a high incidence of the sickling trait; and where the parasite is absent (or comparatively so), the gene frequency would be lower. Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika were found to be desirable laboratories since there are great differences in altitude and rainfall in these regions of East Africa, where some areas are free of malaria, while others show an extreme infestation of the subtertian parasite. He summed up his results of this experiment by saying: "It will be noted that there is a striking correlation between the incidence of sickle-cell trait and malarial severity: all the tribes from hyperendemic areas have an incidence of the trait above 10 per cent, usually above 20 per cent, and up to 40 per cent. Whereas, in all the tribes coming from areas where malaria is seasonal or absent the incidence is below 10 per cent. The likelihood of this distribution occurring as a

result of random genetic drift in a number of relatively isolated populations is extremely small. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that severity of malaria is a very important factor in determining the frequency of the sickle-cell trait. The presence of seasonal malaria or occasional epidemics does not seem to have much effect on the sickle-cell frequency. This suggests that the main effect on the sickle-cell frequency is produced by differential mortality in childhood where the disease is transmitted over the greater part of the year."

What is the relationship of the individual person to malaria in terms of the heterozygote and the non-heterozygote? Allison examined the children of a small African village and found that 46 per cent of the non-sicklers were infected with malaria, as against 28 per cent for the sicklers. Furthermore, the non-sicklers tended to have a more severe case of malaria and a greater number of parasites in the circulation. He inoculated fifteen adult sicklers and fifteen non-sicklers with malarial parasites. Fourteen of the non-sicklers came down with malaria as contrasted with but only two of the sicklers.

The high trait incidence is found, as has been indicated, in the middle belt of Africa, which is a highly malarious area. This excludes the highland and desert areas, which are relatively free of malaria. South of the Zambezi the frequencies are far lower. In these southern regions, hyperendemic subtropical malaria is far less prevalent. In fact, south of the Zambezi the *Plasmodium falciparum* organism (causative agent of subtropical malaria with a chill interval of 24 hours) is being replaced with the *Plasmodium vivax* parasite (causative agent of tertian malaria with a chill interval of 48 hours) as the dominating organism of the region. With the change in the malarial pattern, the future frequency of the sickle-cell gene should be predictable.

## V

In sum, this evidence seems to indicate that the persistence of the sickle-cell gene is the result of a balance between the

pressure of malaria which tends to increase the frequency of the gene and that of sickle-cell anemia which tends to eliminate the gene. Several test situations for the malarial hypothesis can be found in other places besides Africa. A study of the various regions where high sickle-cell gene frequencies exist, such as in Greece, India, Sicily, and Turkey, indicates that the peoples of these regions are heavily parasitized with subtropical malaria. In India, for example, the Irula people living in a highly malarious forest belt have a sickle-cell frequency of about 30 per cent, but the Todas people in the same region, but living in hill country, have an incidence of only just over 3 per cent.

One is also tempted to speculate about the incidence of sickle-cell gene of the Negro in the American population. The question can be put into these terms: what happens to a population which moves from a malarious area to an area relatively free of subtropical malaria? On the basis of the malaria hypothesis, it can be deduced that the gene frequency should be lower. It might also be assumed that when the American Negro ancestral groups were transported as slaves from Africa to the New World, the frequency of the gene was somewhat above 20 per cent. Since that time, yet another factor has entered into the picture—the fact that the American Negro has had an admixture with the Indian and the Caucasoid, groups with considerably lower sickle-cell gene frequencies than the African Negro. The amount of the admixture has been calculated; the gene frequency was lowered to about 15 per cent. In the absence of subtropical malaria and through gene loss from death due to sickle-cell anemia, it can be further calculated that in about twelve generations the percentage frequency of the gene should be about 9 per cent. A study of the American Negro population does indicate a rate of about 9 per cent. This constituted an evolutionary change, as pointed out by Allison, in reverse of what has been happening in the middle belt of Africa, an indication of the rapidity by which evolutionary processes take place when the conditions are correct.

From the standpoint of the evolutionist and the anthropologist, these studies of gene frequencies offer some rather delightful possibilities in the form of problems to be solved. Studies of blood samples collected by Livingston<sup>17</sup> and by me in Liberia indicate a very considerable decrease in the sickle-cell gene frequency from the northwestern borders to the southeastern areas. The tribes with the largest incidence are in the interior on the Sierra Leone border. The frequency decreases on proceeding from this area to the center of the country, where there is found to be a sharp drop from the Gola and Kpelle tribes to the Dei, Bassa, Mano, and Gio peoples. From these latter people, going eastward, the drop is to almost zero per cent in the Webbo tribe. This drop in the gene frequency is completely at odds with the hypothesis concerning hyperendemic subtropical malaria—for this entire area from west to east and north to south is an hyperendemic subtropical malaria region. The highest malaria rates are among the Mano tribe, which has a sickle-cell gene frequency of 2 per cent. If the hypothesis is to be accepted as correct, we must assume that other evolutionary factors must be at work here as well.

The tools of the linguist and of the anthropologist are now brought to bear on the problem. Livingston<sup>18</sup> points out that the Liberian tribes having the highest frequencies speak the West Atlantic or Mande subfamilies of the Niger-Congo linguistic family. At the point of language change between the Mande speaking peoples and the Kru speaking tribes of the Dei and the Bassa, there is the highly significant drop in the sickle-cell gene frequency. This drop in frequency would appear to indicate, if the malaria hypothesis is correct, that these latter tribes, whose frequencies are low, are newcomers to this region. Livingston states that: "The almost complete

<sup>17</sup> F. B. Livingston, "Anthropological Implications of Sickle Cell Gene Distribution in West Africa," *American Anthropologist*, 60, 533-562 (1958).

<sup>18</sup> F. B. Livingston, "The Distribution of the Sickle Cell Gene in Liberia," *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 10, 33-41 (1958).

absence of the sickle cell trait among many of the Kru peoples is another surprising finding of this investigator. Although no anthropometric studies were done, the author would agree with most observers who have written about Liberia that the Kru peoples are the most Negroid of the tribes of Liberia. . . . It thus seems that the sickle-cell gene, although long considered a Negro characteristic, is absent in the 'purest' representatives of the Negro race."

This low frequency pocket is rather fortunately placed, as Spuhler points out, in that through reference to the anthropological history of the people who inhabit this malarial area, deductions can be made as to the reason for the lack of the gene. First, however, a knowledge of the ecology of the *Anopheles gambiae* vector of malaria should serve as a background for the anthropological data. This mosquito does not live in the dense and dark forest areas—it must have sunlight, it depends upon open pools of water for its breeding, and it breeds best in areas where there is human habitation and cleared agricultural lands. In those areas where there are hunters and food gatherers in the dense tropical forest, there is very little, certainly no hyperendemic, malaria. Livingston has shown that the cultural factors responsible for the spread of the gene have only recently reached the isolated peoples of the eastern region of Liberia, and that there has not yet been enough time for the gene frequency to reach the usual high levels found when malarial selection was made possible a long time ago by the introduction of cleared fields for agriculture.

Spuhler states that the tropical rain forest was not opened agriculturally until after the spread of iron tools and the cultivation of such foods as rice, yams, and cassava. These agricultural practices are taking place in these pockets now. These people are recent descendants of the food gathering and hunting peoples who originally inhabited this area. Hyperendemic malaria, as indicated above, does not develop

until after the forest is cleared. In these conditions the heterozygote would not have a selective advantage over either homozygote. The sickle-cell gene frequency and anthropological data are here in mutual support.

There is some support for the idea of the spread of the *A. gambiae* in cleared areas. At the time of the beginning of the development of the Firestone Plantations in Liberia, surveys indicated that of the anopheles genus there were the following species present: *gambiae*, 46 per cent; *funestus*, 51 per cent; and *nili*, 3 per cent. Recent surveys indicate a 100 per cent infestation by the gambian species. In areas where plantations have reverted to forest growth, very few anopheles were found; and of those found, none was the gambian organism. It might also be mentioned that mosquitos are most often found in jungle conditions in regions very close to a village. Hunting and food gathering populations do not build villages as do agricultural populations, and they do not have a high sickle-cell gene rate. This observation is also supported by studies on the Pygmy populations of Africa, who are a food gathering and hunting people.

Livingstone, who has done the basic thinking in tying together this occurrence of the correlation of man's cultural and biological evolution in Africa, concludes that: "Two results of the agricultural revolution seem to account for this change in the role of disease in human evolution: (1) the great changes in the environment, and (2) the huge increase in the human population. Both of these seem to be involved in the development of holoendemic (hyperendemic) malaria. First, when man disrupts the vegetation of any area, he severely disrupts the fauna and often causes the extinction of many mammals, particularly the larger ones. When this happens, there are many known instances of the parasites of these animals adapting to man as the new host. . . . It is thus possible that the parasitization of man by *P. falciparum* is due to man's blundering on the scene and causing the extinction of

the original host. Second, concomitant with the huge increase in the human population, this population became more sedentary and man also became the most widespread large animal. . . . and the most available host for parasites. . . . Under these conditions, holoendemic malaria and probably many other diseases developed and became important factors determining human evolution. . . . The sickle-cell gene thus seems to be an evolutionary response to this changed disease environment."

Thus we have seen that a problem which at first glance seems to be altogether technical in nature and which appears capable of solution by simple, straightforward means turns out on examination to be much more complex and much more involved in other than technical considerations alone. To understand what on the surface looks like a fairly easy medical diagnosis means that we must call on knowledge derived from a wide range of disciplines, each contributing its special information, which when taken by itself does not seem to add up to any significant conclusion, but which when put together in proper perspective, makes a consistent and integrated picture. To explain such a complicated phenomenon on the basis of race theory alone is as absurd scientifically as it is unjust morally, and this condemnation applies in equal measure to any other single-minded hypothesis. Above all, the roll of man himself in changing the balance of nature demands constant attention, and indeed, one is almost tempted to assert that the real villain in the drama of the "sickle-cell" is man himself, and in this, as with many other problems which seem superficially peculiarly African, it turns out that Africa is neither more nor less different from the other continents of the world.

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